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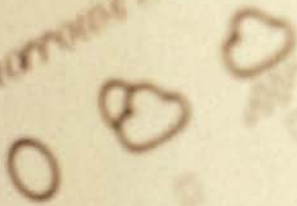
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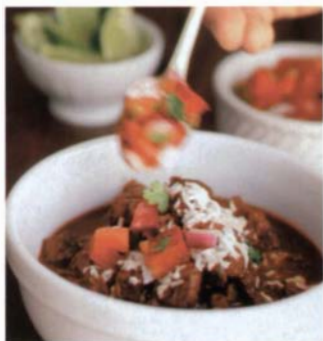
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On the cover: *A Thanksgiving Feast for Twelve*, p. 28.

Cover photo, Ben Fink.

These pages: top left series, Laurie Smith; bottom left, Ben Fink; above center, Mark Ferri; below, Scott Phillips.



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Michael Brisson ("Thanksgiving Feast," p. 28) went to work in a pizza place when he was 16 and he has yet to take a break from cooking. He left his native Rhode Island (and a job at an Italian-Hungarian restaurant) to work in Boston and on Martha's Vineyard, developing his cooking skills along the way. In the early 1980s, Michael landed at Boston's

L'Espalier, where he was sous-chef for two years and pastry chef for three years. Then in 1986, he and his wife, Joan Parzanese, heard about an opportunity to take over the restaurant space at The Charlotte Inn on Martha's Vineyard. They jumped at the chance to start their own business. Twelve years later, L'Etoile is going strong, and Michael still loves to cook every day.

As evinced by his inclusion of his mother's chili recipe in his feature on Texas chili, **Ben Berryhill** ("Chili," p. 37) grew up in a family that loved to cook. A graduate of the Culinary Institute in Hyde Park, New York, Ben has risen through the ranks from line cook to chef de cuisine at the renowned Cafe Annie in Houston.



the head of the pastry department at Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California; before that, he cooked at the restaurant and spent six years as its forager. Alan says that, like meteorology, pastry work is "about achieving precision and consistency with changeable ingredients."

Kathleen Stewart ("Muffins," p. 52) runs the Downtown Bakery & Creamery in Healdsburg, California. Though her title is president and CEO, you'll still see Kathleen at the bakery making her signature muffins, sticky buns, and fresh fruit pies. Before moving to Sonoma County, Kathleen worked at Chez Panisse from 1975 until 1987, when she and two other Chez Panisse employees headed north to open the Downtown Bakery.

Martha Holmberg ("Roasting Pans," p. 56) studied cooking at La Varenne in Paris. She lingered in France for a few years, working as a book editor and as a private chef for an Austrian diplomat who taught her to make goulash, before returning to the States to help launch La Varenne at The Greenbrier in West Virginia. She bounced back to Europe for a stint in London as a cookbook editor and finally landed in the editorial offices of *Fine Cooking* in 1993, where she now works as the editor.

Ethel Brennan ("Goat Cheese," p. 58), writer, teacher, and stylist, has written and

co-written several books, including *Goat Cheese*, *Herbs de Provence*, and *The Child's Kitchen Garden*. She has styled photos for food, lifestyle, and floral design books and magazines, and she has written for the *San Francisco Chronicle* as well as for magazines. Ethel has taught cooking classes to adults at the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco and to children at Sur la Table in Berkeley.



Maggie Glezer ("Herb Flatbread," p. 62) got turned on to breadbaking at age nine and has been baking ever since. An American Institute of Baking Certified Baker, Maggie has written the technical column for

the Guild's newsletter and for King Arthur Flour's Baking Sheet, as well as many food articles for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. She's writing a book on artisan bread-making in America.



When *Fine Cooking* associate editor **Joanne McAllister Smart** ("Oysters," p. 67) first tasted a raw oyster as a teenager, it was not love at first slurp. Years later, she tried oysters again and found—to her delight—that she adores them. Before *Fine Cooking*, Joanne was the managing editor at *Vegetarian Times*, where she could have written a story about saving oysters but not about eating them.

Abigail Johnson Dodge ("American Pies," p. 72) is the director of *Fine Cooking's* test kitchen. The author of *Great Fruit Desserts*, she also contributed to the new *Joy of Cooking*. Abby regularly appears on television, teaches classes, and does cooking demonstrations across the country. She's at work on her next book, *The Weekend Baker*. Pastry is Abby's specialty, and she's especially pleased to be sharing techniques in this issue that help dispel what she calls "pie anxiety."

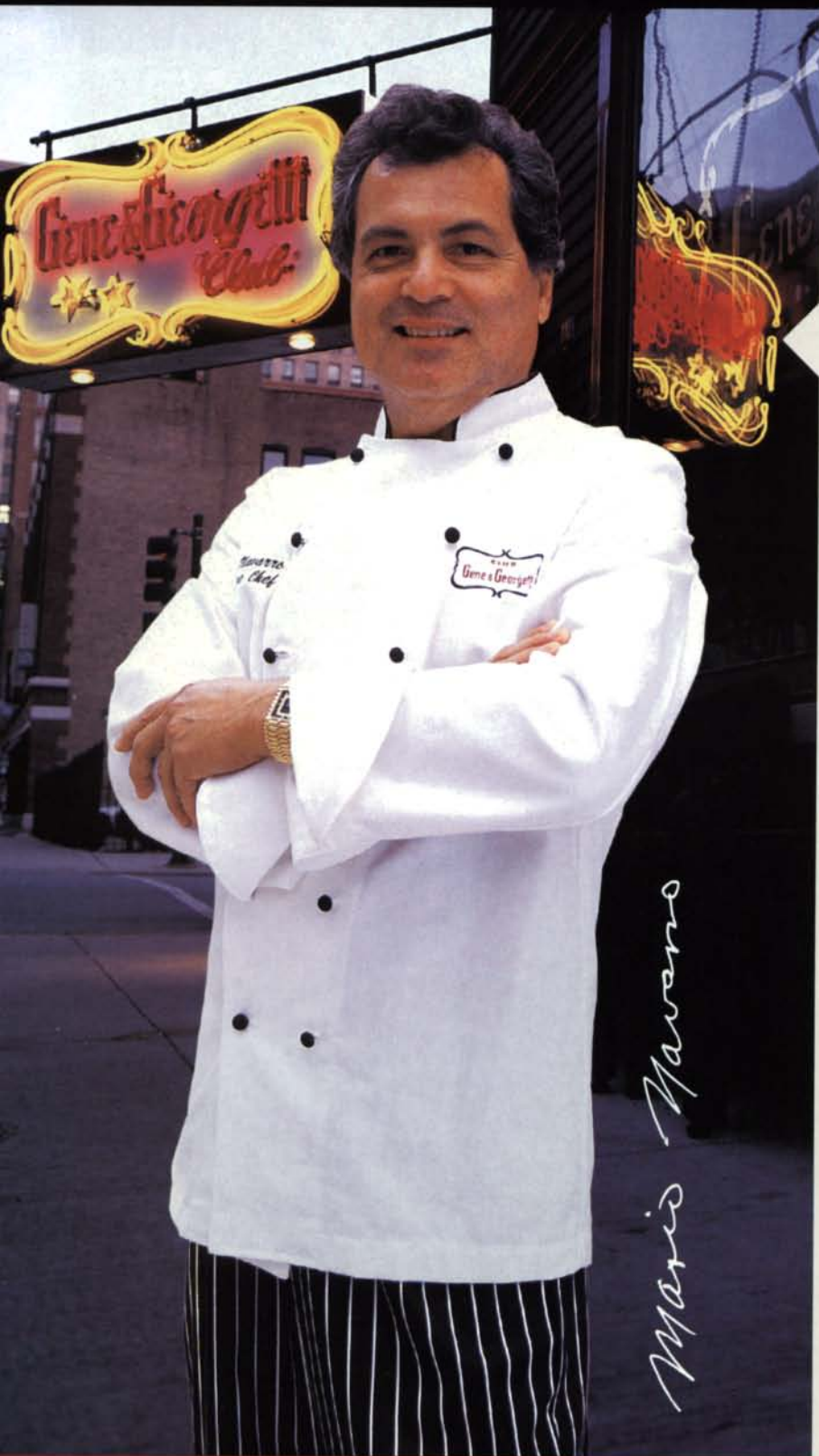


A veteran New York chef and an inveterate tag-saler, **Leslie Revsin** ("Shrimp," p. 42) has filled her home in Bronxville, New York, with charming finds—a bin of ancient rolling pins

here, a drawer full of antique flatware there, dozens of copper and cast-iron pans hanging overhead. Her backyard, where flowers and foliage abound, reveals her other passion: gardening. The first woman chef at the Waldorf and one of thirteen chefs featured in the PBS series *Master Chefs of New York*, Leslie is working on her next cookbook.

Alan Tangren ("Endive," p. 47) worked as a meteorologist before he switched careers to move over to his real love, food. Alan is

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Mario Navarro, Executive Chef—Gene and Georgetti's, Chicago
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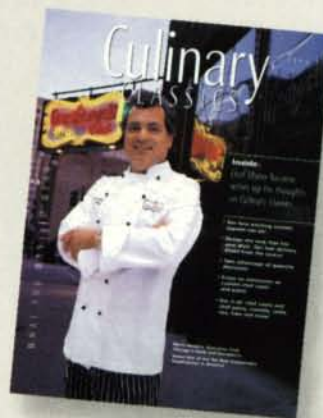
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Melissa's butterscotch sauce changed my life

We've been looking for a sauce to serve with our brownies at Back Alley Bakes in Toronto. Melissa Murphy's butterscotch sauce (*Fine Cooking* #26, p. 71) is now a permanent fixture on our menu. It's so popular at the restaurant, where we sauce double chocolate pecan brownies with this marvelous concoction, that we've doubled our brownie sales in less than two weeks. We want to thank both *Fine Cooking* and Melissa for a sauce that has been praised as sublime.

—Jane Brooks, via e-mail

Editors' note: We'd like to thank Melissa, too. Testing the recipes for her story was a real pleasure; in fact, we tested the butterscotch sauce quite a few times, as I recall, just to make sure.... You can enjoy Melissa's butterscotch sauce by making your own, or if you're near Brooklyn, New York, visit her at Sweet Melissa's, 276 Court Street; 718/855-3410.

Cooking in paradise?

I have subscribed to *Fine Cooking* almost since its inception, and I enjoy it very much. I live in a remote Mayan village in Yucatan, Mexico, hence no computer, and, actually, no electricity today. Even though I can't use all the information in the magazine, it has helped me a lot. I wish you would do an article on a substitute for Bisquick! I get a

little tired of homemade, hand-ground tortillas every day. I'm Scandinavian; tortillas were not a staple of my former life. Sometimes I roll up the tortillas with butter, sugar, and cinnamon—like *lefse*—which appalls people here. I did enjoy the pieces in *FC* #27 about tropical fruits (we have all of them here, plus many more) and cilantro, a definite must to cook here. Also the hint about how to treat chile burns was helpful. Thanks for a great magazine.

—Kristine de Dominquez, Ticul, Yucatan, Mexico

Pie crust tricks

I'd like to respond to the recent Q&A about pie crusts (*FC* #26). The reader keeps kosher and did not want to use butter but had difficulty with margarine. I, too, keep kosher and here are my two solutions for wonderful pie crusts.

First, I used parve stick margarine in the past. (Parve is the kosher term for food that contains neither meat nor milk products. Some kosher margarine contains dairy products and is kosher but not parve.) I was content with margarine until my dad told me that he found nothing as good as Crisco for pie crusts. I tried Crisco and must agree. Great crusts. Regular Crisco is kosher-parve, but the butter-flavored version is not.

Second, and most important, I chill everything. I put the flour, salt, shortening (measured but not cut), pastry cutter, and knife into the bowl, put the whole collection in the fridge, and leave it there while I make the pie filling. I also put ice cubes in the water that I'll use for the crust and set it aside to chill. When the filling

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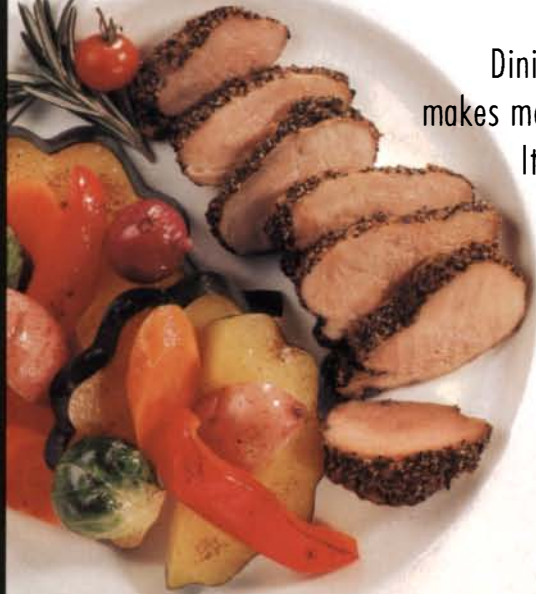
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is ready, I bring out my chilled bowl of crust ingredients and tools and get to work. This method has proven infallible. I get consistently flaky crusts and dough that handles well.
—Robin Winburn, San Francisco

Watch your language

As a charter subscriber to your magazine, I want to compliment you on producing such a valuable work for your readers. Your articles are in-

of years, until an editor at a major food magazine based in California made the mistake of assuming that it now had to be in Spanish. This is like suggesting that the vegetable is fennel. Just does not make sense, but even more seriously, it truly confuses the readers. Julie Sahni's *Classic Indian Cooking* calls it coriander. In fact, all serious books use the English. I'd expect the same from you.

—Terence Janerico, Boston



Cilantro is the name more and more people use for fresh coriander leaves.

teresting, detailed, and most often perfectly correct.

FC #26, however, contains an egregious error. The article in Flavorings (p. 76) makes the absurd assumption that Spanish is more correct than English. Coriander does not refer to the whole plant. *Coriander seed* tells you which part of the plant. *Fresh coriander* refers to the leaves. It has for hundreds

Editors' reply: Well, we try not to confuse our readers, but when we reviewed the paragraphs in question, we realized that we'd been a bit fuzzy. What we meant to say was that because there are many parts to the coriander plant, you need to find terminology to distinguish them, especially leaf from seed. Whether the trend for using *cilantro* began with the California editor or not, the trend continues, and the word is now as much a part of the English language as lasagne or burrito.

We've found that in most grocery stores (which is where you'll need to make a choice about what to call it, especially at the checkout when you get that "what the...?" look from the teenage cashier), the fresh herb is labeled as cilantro.

Julie Sahni, in her latest book, *Savoring Spices & Herbs*

(Morrow), has adopted the same terminology that we use: "The coriander plant... produces both the herb cilantro—the leaves—and the spice coriander—the seeds. Cilantro, the Spanish name for the herb, is used to avoid confusion between the two."

Clarifications and corrections

◆ In the recipe for Velveted Stir-Fry with Lemon Sauce (FC #28, p. 65), you may have to adjust the time given

for the final cooking of the chicken or fish, depending on the size of the food, how long it was velvety, and the heat of your wok. The author's original recipe had included a line suggesting that you check for doneness, which *Fine Cooking* recommends for all recipes.

◆ In the recipe for the Strawberry Hazelnut Torte (FC #27, p. 77), the crust ingredients should have called for two egg yolks, not one as printed. The extra yolk yields a more tender, crumbly crust. ◆

Getting the most from *Fine Cooking's* recipes

When you cook from a *Fine Cooking* recipe, we want you to get as good a result as we did in our test kitchen, so we recommend that you follow the guidelines below in addition to the recipe instructions.

Before you start to cook, read the recipe completely. Gather the ingredients and prepare them as directed in the recipe list before proceeding to the method. Give your oven plenty of time to heat to the temperature in the recipe; use an oven thermometer to check.

Always start checking for doneness a few minutes before the suggested time in the recipe. For meat and poultry, use an instant-read thermometer.

In baking recipes especially, the amounts of some ingredients (flour, butter, nuts, etc.) are listed by weight (pounds, ounces) and by volume (cups, tablespoons). Professional bakers measure by weight for consistent results, but we list volume measures too because not many home cooks have scales (although we highly recommend them—see *Fine Cooking* #13, p. 68, and #17, p. 62).

To measure flour by volume, stir the flour and then lightly spoon it into a dry measure and level it with a knife; don't shake or tap the cup. Measure liquids in glass or plastic liquid measuring cups.

Unless otherwise noted, assume that

- ◆ Butter is unsalted.
- ◆ Eggs are large (about 2 ounces each).
- ◆ Flour is all-purpose (don't sift unless directed to).
- ◆ Sugar is granulated.
- ◆ Garlic and fresh ginger are peeled.
- ◆ Fresh herbs, greens, and lettuces are washed and dried.

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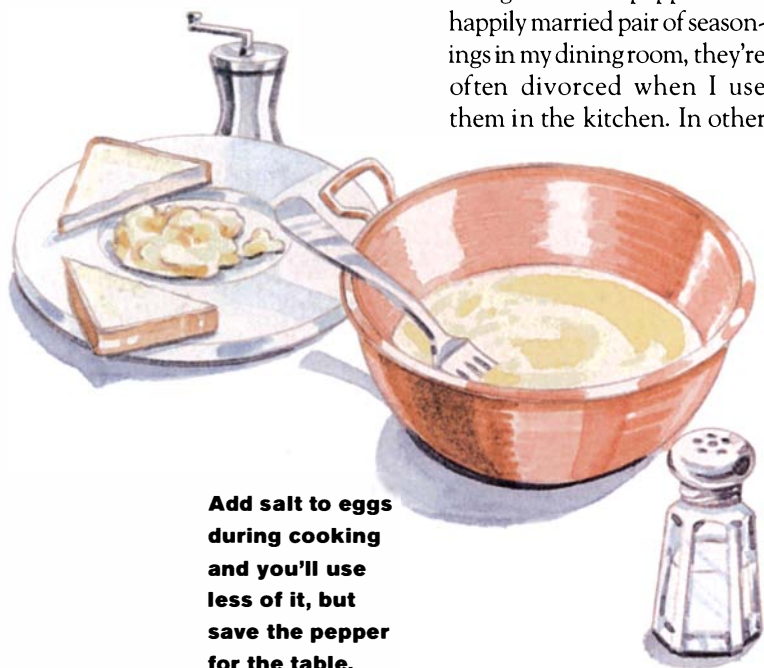
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The right moment to season eggs

Is it better to salt and pepper eggs before cooking, or after?

—Rosalie Caravarro, Larkspur, CA

Molly Stevens replies: Although salt and pepper are a happily married pair of seasonings in my dining room, they're often divorced when I use them in the kitchen. In other



Add salt to eggs during cooking and you'll use less of it, but save the pepper for the table.

words, I salt eggs before cooking and pepper them after.

By adding salt to food before, or even during cooking, I tend to use less of it, and the salt enhances flavor without making the food taste too salty. It's true that salt can draw out water from raw eggs and turn them tough and rubbery when cooked, but this only occurs if you're using a lot of salt and adding it to the eggs far in advance of cooking. Since I add only a pinch to the eggs right before I cook them, or as they cook, there's little time for the salt to affect the eggs' texture.

Freshly ground pepper loses much of its flavor when it's heated. While it won't harm the eggs to add a pinch

during cooking, you'll get the best pepper flavor if you grind a bit on your eggs afterward. *Molly Stevens is a contributing editor for Fine Cooking.*

Get the pie crust to collapse with apples

When I heap apples in a pie shell and cover them with a top crust, I end up with a hollow dome of baked pastry with the cooked apples far below. I have plenty of steam vents. Why won't my pie crust fall?

—Molly Ryan, Ridgeway, IA

Carole Walter replies: I also make my apple pies brimming with fruit, and you're correct when you note that fresh apples shrink as they cook. Steam vents will prevent the crust from cracking and encourage overflowing juices to evaporate, but they won't make the crust drop.

When the top crust remains aloft, it's usually because the dough was rolled out too thick or stretched too tightly over the filling. To correct these problems, roll your pastry to 1/8 inch thick and drape it over the mounded fruit. Before sealing the edge, put

your hands on either side of the crust and push the dough gently toward the center. Give the pie a quarter turn and ease the dough toward the center again. This will give your top crust plenty of slack. As the pie cools after baking, the crust should deflate completely. If it doesn't, coax it by tapping the surface gently with the back of a fork. *Carole Walter is the author of Great Pies & Tarts and Great Cakes (both Clarkson Potter).*

Why is my homemade buttermilk so thick?

I make my own buttermilk by culturing milk with store-bought buttermilk. The results are usually good but occasionally I get a slimy, thick, almost bouncy substance. Why?

—William Doucette, Brattleboro, VT

Rob Byrne replies: Originally, buttermilk was just the liquid that was left after churning butter—a watery product that didn't have much flavor. Your method is more in keeping with today's commercial operations, where

low- or nonfat milk is heated to 185°F to denature some of the proteins and destroy the spoilage microorganisms in the milk.

The milk is then cooled to room temperature (72°F), starter culture (like store-bought buttermilk) is stirred in, and the mixture is covered and incubated for 14 to 16 hours. During this time, the starter culture produces acid, which accounts for buttermilk's tangy



Roll out a top crust thinly to help it drop.



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flavor, and the proteins in the milk coagulate, which gives buttermilk its thick, creamy texture. Finally, the mixture is stirred and cooled to refrigeration temperature (40°F).

A few conditions could have made your buttermilk particularly dense, which would make it appear bouncy. Buttermilk is usually made from low-fat or skim milk; using whole milk would make it denser. If the buttermilk is incubated for too long or at too high a temperature, it may also turn out thick.

When making buttermilk at home, the main concern is preventing contamination. Use milk that's not close to its expiration date. Boil all containers and utensils for at least five minutes before using them. Start each new batch with store-bought buttermilk

as your culture to avoid passing along contaminants from a previous batch. And, as with any food product that looks or smells suspicious, when in doubt, throw it out.

Rob Byrne is the vice president of regulatory affairs for the National Milk Producers Federation in Arlington, Virginia.

Can a food processor handle bread dough?

I've been trying to make French bread in my original Cuisinart food processor. How much dough can it knead?

—Bill Moran,
San Diego, TX

Sue Manory replies:

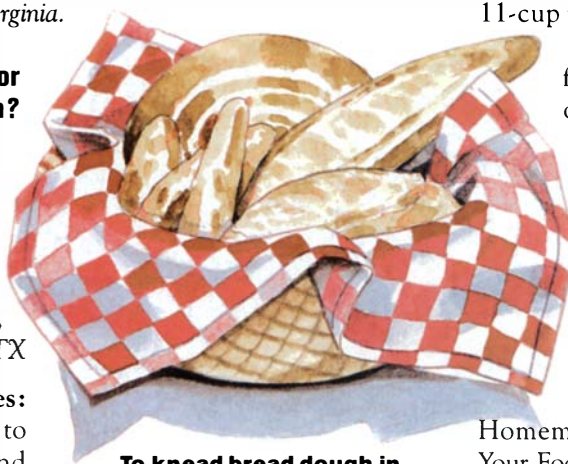
There are a few ways to compare capacity and strength of food processors. Most manufac-

turers give you the workbowl's capacity in cups and the power in the amount of bread dough (by weight) that the motor can knead. At Cuisinart, we also tell you how many cups of flour your machine can handle when making bread.

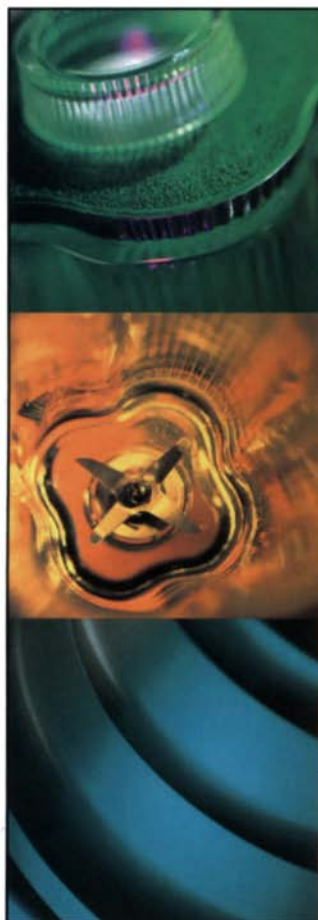
Your old Cuisinart is probably the equivalent of the current Classic with a 7-cup capacity. It can handle up to 4 cups of flour and knead 2 pounds of dough. But if you plan to make bread frequently using the processor, you'll be better off with the larger 11-cup machine, which can

handle up to 5 cups of flour and 2½ pounds of dough. The 14-cup model accepts 6 cups of flour and 3 pounds of dough.

Sue Manory is the home economist for Cuisinart. For recipes and techniques, consult The Best Bread Ever—Great Homemade Bread Using Your Food Processor (Broadway Books) by Charles van Over. ♦



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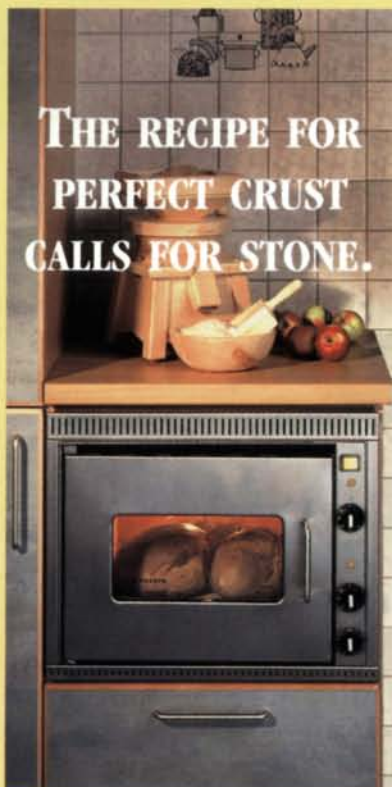
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Sweet Peppers for Frying, Roasting, and Enjoying

One delicious consequence of the recent explosion of interest in ethnic foods in this country is the huge variety of peppers that are now available in markets and on farmstands. Hot chile peppers come in all different shapes, sizes, and intensities—and there's also a rainbow of sweet peppers out

there. Choices stretch way beyond standard American bell peppers to an array of full flavors and interesting shapes that peppers, native to South America, have taken on all over the world as they've been bred into different shapes, forms, and flavors.

From tiny European cherry peppers for pickling to elon-

gated Caribbean Cubanelles for frying, sweet peppers mean shopping and cooking pleasures for all the senses, whether for sautéing, roasting, drying, stewing, or just eating out of hand.

Look for brightly colored, glossy fruits

When you're choosing sweet

peppers, freshness is critical for good quality and flavor.

All sweet peppers start out green and then ripen to the color that they're bred to be, whether it's yellow, gold, orange, red, or chocolate brown. (The purple and creamy white bell peppers recently on the market are actually in intermediate stages



Round cherry peppers come in both sweet and hot varieties. Stuff sweet ones with feta or mozzarella cheese. Pickle them with chunks of other vegetables such as carrots, cauliflower, and cucumbers for a beautiful way to preserve the tastes of summer.



Sweet Hungarian peppers can be pointy, blunt, or lobed but are generally smaller than American bells. They range in color from chartreuse to pale yellow to soft orange to bright red, and from sweet to hot. With their mild but full flavor, they're great in stews, soups, stir-fries, or to stuff and bake.



American bell peppers are easy to spot on most grocery shelves. They're blocky and uniform in shape with three or four lobes and thick, crunchy walls. You'll find them in a wide range of colors: green, cream, yellow, orange, red, and even chocolate brown. The most commonly available sweet pepper, American bells are a delicious multipurpose pepper; great for frying, roasting, grilling, stuffing, pickling, or eating out of hand.



Holland peppers, also called Lamuyo-type peppers, are similar to American bells, but they're more elongated and somewhat irregular in shape. Like standard American peppers, you'll see them in a range of colors. Once shipped in from the Netherlands, they're now easier to find here.

of ripening. And purple peppers turn green when you cook them, so if you like the color, use them raw). At the green stages, peppers are less sweet and can be harder to digest. I find that people who say they don't like peppers have probably only eaten green ones. Green peppers are, of course, okay to eat, but I recommend buying ripe ones if they're available.

Select bright, firm peppers with no soft spots or blemishes. Skins should be glossy and smooth with a visible sheen. Look for strong,

clear color, whether it's ivory, yellow, gold, orange, crimson, or chocolate; fully colored peppers have more sugars, better flavor, and are higher in beta carotene and vitamin C. Stay away from rubbery-feeling, bruised, or dull-skinned peppers—they don't look or taste as good.

Most pepper varieties are multipurpose. They're good for frying, roasting, grilling, pickling, or just eating fresh. That said, some are more suited than others to certain kinds of cooking. Thin-walled peppers like Cubanelles are

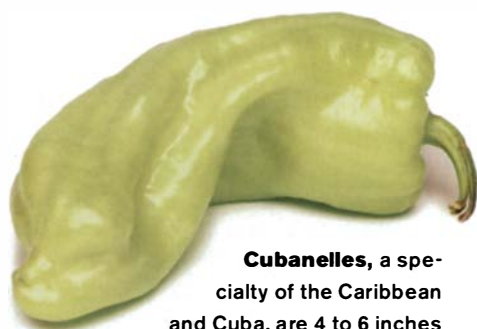
often called frying peppers because they fry up more easily than thick-walled peppers do, while fleshy peppers like regular American bells and old-fashioned pimientos are better for stuffing and roasting. Little round cherry peppers are easiest to pickle whole.

Store peppers in the fridge in plastic vegetable bags and bring them to room temperature before using them. You'll get the crispest texture and fullest flavor this way.

I love to gently sauté a colorful mix of sliced sweet peppers in a little olive oil

until the peppers are slightly caramelized. Sometimes I add garlic or onions, but other times I just season them with a little sea salt and freshly ground pepper. Then I heap these succulent morsels onto some fresh, crusty bread to feast on with some shaved Asiago and an oaky California Chardonnay.

Renee Shepherd is a longtime gardening cook and seed cataloguer. Her new company, Renee's Garden, offers gourmet seed packets at independent nurseries nationwide. ♦



Cubanelles, a specialty of the Caribbean and Cuba, are 4 to 6 inches long. They're mild tasting and delicious fried up for a po' boy, Philly cheese steak, or traditional Cuban sandwich to fill with onions and slow-roasted pork. You can also pickle them or slice them for crispy baked or fried rings.



Pimientos are classic, thick-walled sweet peppers worth seeking out. They're either heart shaped or look like ribbed, flattened globes. They're rich bright crimson or yellow and have thick, sweet, crunchy flesh. I love to eat pimientos fresh, just like an apple.



Italian bull's horn or Italian frying peppers are the Godzillas of the pepper world—they can grow as long as 12 inches. Green early in the season but deep yellow or red when fully ripe, they have crispy, very sweet flesh that's perfect for slow sautéing in fruity olive oil with a little garlic and fresh herbs.



Sweet banana wax peppers are mild tasting and crisp, with thinner walls than American bell peppers. Banana peppers can also be quite pungent; mild varieties come early in the season and are good for pickling, cut into rings for fresh salads, or sautéed with lean pork or chicken.

More at the market

Look for these signs of fall in produce stores and on market stands:

- ♦ **Artichokes** for grilling, gratins, or to steam and eat dipped in melted butter.
- ♦ **Delicata, pumpkin, and butternut squash** for stuffing and baking, for soups, or simply for cutting into chunks and roasting.
- ♦ **Chanterelle, oyster, shiitake, and porcini mushrooms** for *ragoûts* and risotti.
- ♦ **Pears of all kinds** for crisps and compotes or as a simple dessert with Maytag blue or Stilton cheese.
- ♦ **Apples of all kinds** for eating out of hand or tucking into turnovers, pies, or *tartes Tatin*.



Refreshing apéritif from Frog's Leap

Remember Liebfraumilch, the fruity-sweet stuff you might have quaffed once upon a time at a Bonnie Raitt concert (or a cocktail party, depending on how old you were in the '70s)?

Frog's Leap Winery remembers. The Napa Valley winemaker has just released Leapfrogmilch, a German-style blend of Chenin Blanc and Riesling. I'm glad to say that the similarity between

the wines goes no further than the pun in the name. This wine is well-crafted: crisp, dry, and refreshingly floral-fruity, it's a delicious apéritif. I'd open some Leapfrogmilch (the cork has "ribbit" printed on it) to sip with fresh goat cheese or smoked salmon, or even with mild, spicy-sweet Asian dishes, like *pad thai* or ginger-spiked chicken. A bottle retails for \$16. For distributors, call 800/959-4704.

—Amy Albert, associate editor,
Fine Cooking



Flexible spatulas for pies and brownies

You've just made a beautiful pie, and now you have to take out a slice without wrecking it.

Try a super-thin flexible stainless-steel spatula shaped like a wedge.

You'll also find a square-ended flexible spatula really handy for lasagne and brownies, and at \$9.50 for the pair, they're a great value, too. To order, call Solutions (800/342-9988).

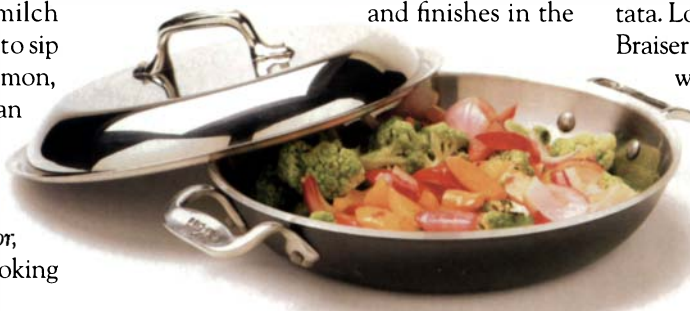
New All-Clad petite braiser is perfect for one-pot dinners

I'm always looking for the perfect pot to cook dinner in from start to finish, and I've finally found it. All-Clad's new "petite braiser" is ten inches in diameter and two inches deep, with a domed lid. It's the perfect thing for my family's favorite dish—seared mustard chicken with rice—which starts out on the stove

and finishes in the oven. I especially love the domed lid because I can pile a lot of ingredients (like shredded cabbage for braised pork) in the pan, and the lid fits over them and seals in moisture and flavor.

The pan is also great for stir-frying, it's big enough to sear 1½ pounds of pork tenderloin, and it's the perfect vessel for my favorite artichoke frittata. Look for the All-Clad Ltd. Petite Braiser (anodized-aluminum exterior with stainless interior) in stores that sell All-Clad, or order it for \$99 from A Cook's Wares (800/915-9788).

—Abigail Johnson Dodge,
test kitchen director,
Fine Cooking



Events

PECAN FESTIVAL

Brunswick, Missouri
October 2–4

Sample lots of pecan pies, candies, cookies, and cakes. There are country-ham and pecan-pie auctions, as well as barbecued chicken, pork-burgers, country ham, and a fish fry. Call 660/548-3636.

ROCK SHRIMP FESTIVAL

St. Marys, Georgia
October 3

Rock shrimp cooks faster than other shrimp, and its flesh has a taste between that of shrimp and lobster tail. Festival dinners of fried rock shrimp, hush puppies, cole slaw, and French fries are served all day. Call 800/868-8687.

SNITZ FEST

Willow Street,
Pennsylvania
October 3

In Pennsylvania Dutch, snitz (also spelled schnitz) means cut and dried apples. Try heritage apples, tour the orchard of the historic Hans Herr House and taste the first American apple, the Roxbury Russet. Call 717/464-4438.

MONTICELLO WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL

Charlottesville, Virginia
October 3–4

The beautiful fall foliage is the backdrop for wine tastings from some of Virginia's medal-winning wineries, gourmet foods, wine exhibits, and a Bacchanalian feast; Call 804/296-4188, ext. 21.

CRANBERRY HARVEST WEEKEND

Nantucket,
Massachusetts
October 16–18

Sample cranberry muffins, candies, pizza, cakes, and bread. A cranberry cooking contest is open to amateur and professional chefs. Call 508/228-1700.

Send February and March listings (by November 1) to *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by e-mail to fc@taunton.com.

Cyberkitchen: Joy online

Fans of *The All New All Purpose Joy of Cooking* (Scribner, 1998) or any of the old *Joy*s will want to check out www.simonsays.com/joy. The site includes seasonal menus, new recipes, nutritional information, a bit of *Joy* history (including a trivia quiz), a readers' forum, and—most helpful—revised recipes, correcting problems discovered in recipes after the new *Joy* went to press.

Silky Spanish ham comes to the U.S.

Good news! *Jamón serrano*, a salt-cured, air-dried ham from Spain, is now available stateside (which means I no longer have to smuggle it in my suitcase after visiting my Spanish in-laws). Sliced as thin as rose petals, the best *jamón serrano* delivers an intense, salty-sweet flavor that makes Italian prosciutto seem ordinary by comparison. It's sublime with cheese, on bread, or by itself. While the imported *jamón* I've tasted so far wouldn't quite pass muster with my mother-in-law in Seville, it's delicious nonetheless. *Jamón serrano* is just becoming available in specialty food stores, and it can be ordered in 1-pound packages (very thinly sliced) from Balducci's (800/225-3822) for \$24.

—Sarah Jay, associate editor,
Fine Cooking



Perfect grains from a "smart" rice cooker

When I have a lot on my mind, Zojirushi's top-of-the-line Neuro Fuzzy Rice Cooker/Warmer is a great kitchen ally. I measure, enter a command, and turn my thoughts elsewhere until serving time—which could be hours later. Releasing the lid, I see that, once again, the rice is cooked just right: moist, slightly chewy, delicious.

The cooking is orchestrated by electronic thermosensors that monitor progress, signalling a microcomputer to make subtle changes in temperature or cooking time. Rice steams at a gentle pace, taking about 15 minutes longer than on the stovetop or with the cruder on-and-off action of an inexpensive bucket-style machine.

Neuro Fuzzy's sleek white plastic housing seals and insulates rice against moisture loss, keeping the grains fresh even after two hours on "warm," long after a test batch in a bucket-style cooker had begun to dry out.

Instructions in the badly translated manual apply best to making Japanese short-grain rice, but you



can make almost any other rice or grain, from basmati to bulgur, in the machine. I use a little less liquid than when cooking on the stovetop. By selecting "harder" or "softer," I can shorten or extend cooking time. A timer lets me delay cooking for up to 13 hours.

Is the Neuro Fuzzy worth its hefty price? If you cook grains regularly or want to nudge yourself into cooking them more often, the answer could be yes. The 5-cup machine costs \$200 and the 10-cup model \$220 at Zabar's (800/697-6301). For other sources, call Zojirushi (800/733-6270) or visit www.zojirushi.com.

—Toni Lydecker, author of
Serves One: Super Meals for Solo Cooks (Lake Isle Press)

LEMON FESTIVAL

Stow House
Goleta, California
October 17–18

Wander the grounds of a lemon rancher's estate of the early 1900s and sample lemon pies, lemon chicken, yogurt, cotton candy, cake, and lemonade. Pie-eating and pie-baking contests round out the festivities. Call 800/646-5382.

ANDOUILLE FESTIVAL

LaPlace, Louisiana
October 23–25

Andouille is a spicy sausage used in Cajun cooking, especially jambalaya and gumbo. Other festival foods: pizza, seafood po' boys, bayou pasta, and deep-fried corn on the cob. Call 504/652-9569.

HOPLAND PASSPORT WEEKEND

Hopland, California
October 24–25

An Octoberfest open house at all seven Hopland area wineries, with some of the best wine, food, music and tours in Mendocino county. A small fee includes a commemorative wine glass and food and wine tastings. Call 800/846-8637.

URBANNA OYSTER FESTIVAL

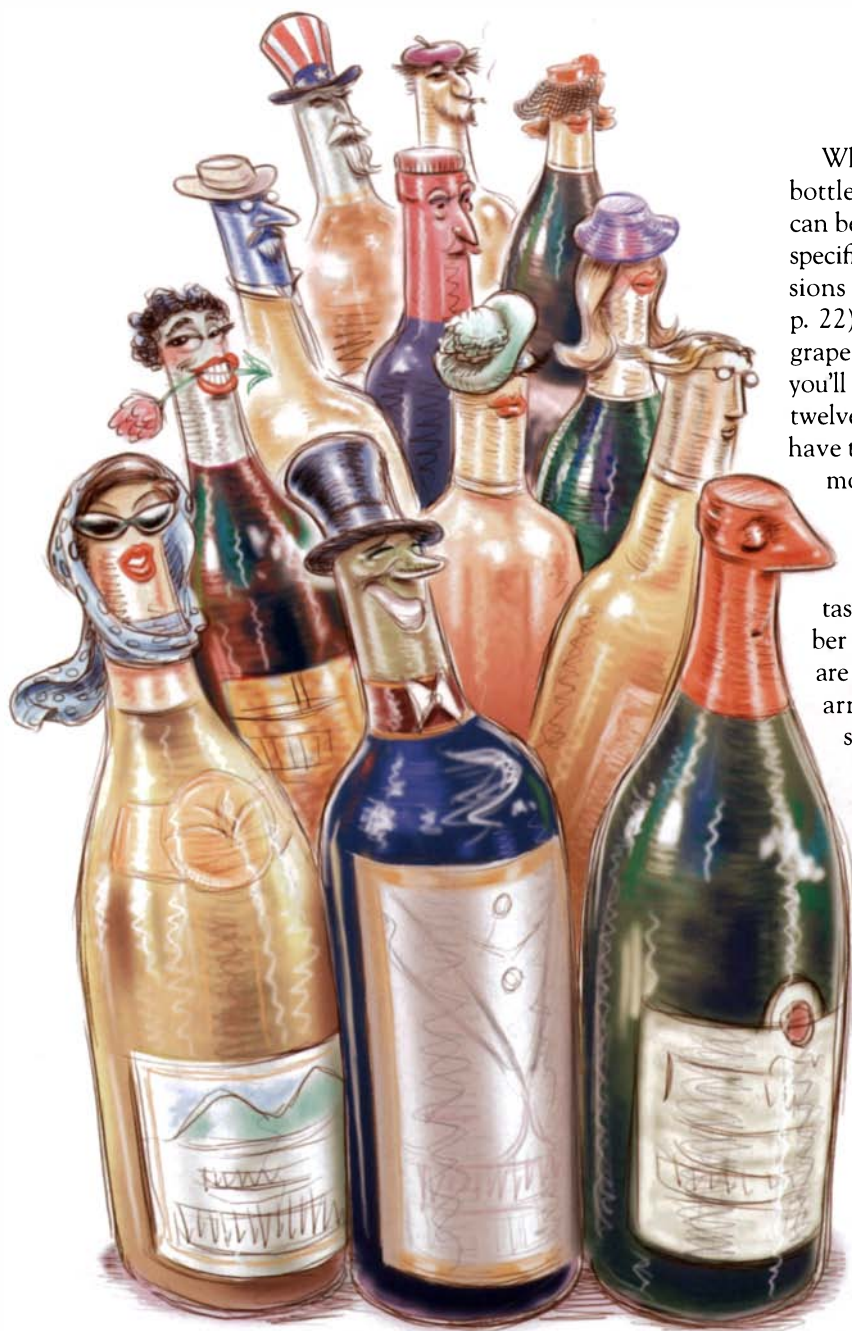
Urbanna, Virginia
November 6–7

About 80,000 people descend on the tiny town of Urbanna (population 750) for oysters that are served fried, on the half shell, roasted, steamed, in fritters, and in stews. Clams come the same way. Call 804/758-0368.

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

World Trade Center
Boston, Massachusetts
November 13–15

One of New England's largest holiday events offers specialty foods and crafts from 300 exhibitors, including some of America's finest artisans and chefs. Dozens of gingerbread houses on display. Call 617/742-3973.



Shopping for a Mixed Case of Wine

Buying a case of wine doesn't have to mean committing to a dozen of the same bottles. A case of twelve different bottles is great to have on hand as a starter cellar, it makes a wonderful gift, and it's fun to shop for. Plus, many wine shops will cut you a

break and give you a slightly lower "case price" while they let you mix up your selections.

Choose a theme

So now you're loose in a wine store with money to spend, but you don't know where to start. Life could be worse.

Why not select your twelve bottles based on a theme? It can be as general as wines for specific types of meals or occasions (see what I bought on p. 22) or more specific, like grape type. With a theme, you'll end up with more than twelve bottles of wine: you'll have twelve chances to learn more about some aspect of wine that you're interested in. (Jot down notes after you've tasted to help you remember your impressions.) Here are some possible angles for arranging a mixed-case shopping list.

♦ **Go with bargains in mind.** Aim for a

resist.) Or try a bunch of different Chardonnays from all over; besides France and the United States, Chardonnay grows in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Italy, and just about every other wine producing region in the world. You'll be amazed at the difference between the lean, flinty Chardonnay of a French Chablis and a big, buttery Chardonnay from Napa or Sonoma.

♦ **Explore a particular region.** An array of reds from the Côtes de Provence, for example, will get you acquainted with the grape types planted there. You'll get to know some of the flavors of

Choose a theme,
or select a mix of bottles
for different occasions.

dozen delicious finds under \$10. Price is the easiest way to narrow down the field, and you'll find great buys under \$10 from all over the globe. Best

Cellars, a wine store in Manhattan, stocks only wines in this price range. The store arranges wines by style, which makes it easy to pick something you think you'll enjoy.

♦ **Discover the multiple characteristics of a single varietal.** Try buying a mixed case of Pinot Noirs to compare from Washington, Oregon, different parts of California, and of course, the many regions of Burgundy. (I'd find a mixed case of reds from just about any part of Burgundy impossible to

this sunny, dry region on the Mediterranean, and how the climate and location might affect the character of its wines.

♦ **Learn to recognize a producer's style.** Wine stores sometimes carry a number of bottles by the same winemaker. Try buying Zinfandels, Merlots, Sauvignon Blancs, and Chardonnays from specific Sonoma Valley producers and compare how each winemaker bottled the grape type. This is a great way to get to know the releases of an individual producer.

Make a list

Once you pick your strategy, set a price limit, like \$200, and jot down a wish list to keep you on track. Even if you

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creamy butters

veer from your original strategy, a list will keep you from getting overwhelmed by too-eager sales help or by just too many bottles on the shelves.

Find a good guide

If you haven't found a trusty local wine merchant or wine-loving friend to shop with, bring along a guide as your shopping companion. *The Quarterly PocketList* is a survey of top-rated wines for \$15 and under, compiled by John Vankat, a botanist who loves wine. "I'm a typical absent-minded professor," says Vankat, "and writing this guide was the only way I could remember what to buy." See Sources on p. 90 for how to order.

Amy Albert is an associate editor for Fine Cooking. ♦

Here's what I got for \$176

♦ **Three light wines for apéritifs.** These are great for when people drop by or to enjoy by myself. I got a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc from Stoneleigh (light and dry, \$10), a Washington Chenin Blanc by Hogue Cellars (light and fruity, \$7), and a Ribeauvillé Tokay Pinot Gris from France's Alsace region (medium-bodied and dry, \$10).

♦ **Four medium-bodied reds for drinking soon.** For bringing to dinner parties or drinking at home, I wanted crossover wines that would be delicious with roast chicken, salmon, or steak. There are bargains from almost every major wine-growing region in the world. I got an \$8 Ribero del Duero made by Bodegas de Fuentespina (well-priced lusty wines come from this part of northern Spain); a \$16 Château de la Terrière Brouilly (Didier, my wine guy, was nuts about this cru Beaujolais, especially for grilled foods), an \$8 Coltibuono Italian Sangiovese, and

a Rex Hill Pinot Noir from Oregon (a steal at \$12).

♦ **Two big white wines for special dinners.** Here I was up for a splurge. I wanted a crisp, full-bodied Chablis or other big white Burgundy for the seared or poached fish and beurre blanc type dinners I love to make. I hunted down a good Chablis for \$19 (a Premier Cru "Vaillons" by Jeanne-Paule Fillippi) but then came the surprise: Didier said I had to try a Casa Lapostolle Chardonnay from Chile (\$25) that he claimed would rival the Chablis.

♦ **A bottle or two to cellar for a few years.** I was ready to spend up to \$45 for a knockout French red, but on Didier's advice, I got two bottles for the same amount: a top-shelf Santa Rita Chilean Cabernet (\$16) and a Mount Veeder Cabernet from Napa (\$25).

♦ **A dessert wine.** I chose a Coteaux du Layon from Baumard (\$20), a sweet wine from the Loire with lots of complexity and flavor.

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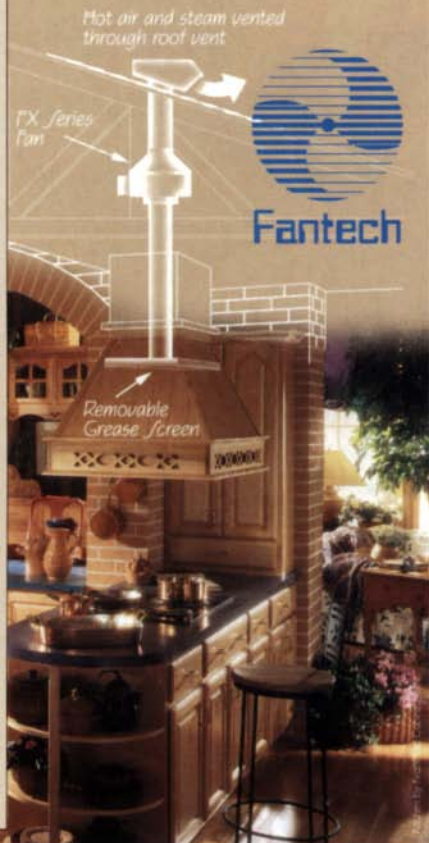
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Vegetable Purées Make Easy, Full-Bodied Sauces

Many chefs today, while not giving up entirely on using butter and cream, have embraced vegetable purées as a way to create sauces or to give texture or saucelike consistency to flavorful liquids like deglazed pan juices or the drippings from a roast. Although these purées are intrinsically more healthy, they're successful because they're delicious.

I often use vegetable purées by whisking some into a pan sauce or gravy in the same way I would add cream or butter for flavor and body. For example, after deglazing with red wine the pan in which I cooked a couple of lamb chops, I'll stir in a little



Roasted peppers get peeled and seeded before a quick purée in the food processor.

onion purée and perhaps the tiniest bit of butter.

I'll also use a vegetable purée as a base for a sauce made independently of the



Roasted red pepper purée makes a flavorful accompaniment to sautéed chicken. Add a splash of balsamic vinegar or the deglazed juices from the sauté pan to jazz up the purée.

food it accompanies. For example, a purée of roasted red peppers flavored with balsamic vinegar or some puréed *chipotle* chiles is an easy, flavorful, and colorful sauce for grilled fare, like ribs or chicken.

Cook the vegetable first. In order to be puréed, the

vegetable must be softened through cooking. Delicate vegetables, such as sorrel or spinach, need just a quick sauté to soften them. Fresh chiles and red bell peppers benefit from being charred; this makes it easy to remove their skins and gives them a deeper, sweeter flavor. Vegetables roasted right along with a whole chicken or turkey become soft enough to purée and are delicious stirred into gravy.

Make-ahead purées are an easy way to add body and flavor to sauces



Roasted garlic squeezes out easily. Putting it through a strainer or a food mill makes a smoother purée and eliminates any stray papery skins.



Use a wooden spoon to force the garlic through the mesh strainer.



A little garlic purée gives a pan sauce body and a toasty sweet flavor. Deglaze the pan with white wine, cook off some of the wine, and then swirl in some purée and a bit of butter.

The right tool for the best purée

There are all kinds of kitchen gadgets you can use to purée.

The electric approach. Food processors work really well for stiffer purées, such as those made from root vegetables or onions.

Blenders are best for more liquid mixtures, such as thin sauces designed to be served around the food in a large soup plate. I also like to use a blender for puréeing leafy

vegetables and herbs; the blades seem to reach the food better, giving you a more emulsified purée that's uniform in color.

Puréeing unplugged. For a smoother purée or to remove any seeds or skins, you may want to force the food through a food mill, a drum sieve, or a chinois (a very fine mesh strainer).

A food mill uses a propeller-like crank to force the mixture through a perforated metal grid. This tool has the advantage of straining and puréeing at the same time—perfect for ingredients like tomatoes that can be puréed without first removing their skins and seeds.

A fine mesh strainer, a chinois, and a drum sieve are the best gadgets for getting the smoothest purées possible. For all three tools, the food is pushed through tiny openings on a screen with a ladle (for

Purée the vegetables that were cooked with a roast to make a flavorful gravy



Out of the pan and into the food mill. Wipe any excess fat off the vegetables before puréeing.



Add the purée to the deglazed pan juices until the sauce is as thick as you like.



Purée-thickened gravies look more rustic than ones thickened with starch, but they won't have a floury taste.

liquids in a strainer or chinois) or a wooden spoon (for stiff mixtures in drum sieve), a process—not as tedious as it sounds—that guarantees a perfectly smooth purée. I've found that using an electric

tool for an initial purée, such as a food processor for onions, followed by a press through a fine-mesh strainer is the best method for obtaining the smoothest purée with the least work.

James Peterson, a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, is the author of the award-winning Sauces (Wiley & Sons). His latest book is Vegetables (William Morrow). ♦

Four basic vegetable purées to get you started

The following short recipes will give you an idea of how to make vegetable purées and how to use them.

Bell Pepper or Chile Purée

How to use: As a light sauce for fish and grilled chicken; incorporated into a mayonnaise.

How to cook: Roast or grill peppers or chiles until charred. Remove stems, seeds, ribs, and charred skins.

How to purée: In a food processor. For a perfectly smooth purée, work through a strainer, a food mill, or a drum sieve.

Embellishments: A little balsamic vinegar; deglazed pan drippings; puréed canned *chipotle* chiles.

Roasted Garlic Purée

How to use: Whisked into a pan sauce after deglazing or into the juices from the roasting pan to add body and flavor; thinned with broth or a little cream (or both) for a velvety sauce that's appropriate for grilled meats and seafood.

How to cook: Cut off the top third of a few heads of garlic to expose the cloves and wrap the garlic loosely in foil. Roast at 400°F until soft, about 1 hour.

How to purée: Squeeze the garlic pulp into a food mill or press it through a strainer to remove stray skins.

Embellishments: A little olive oil for a smoother, satiny finish.

Onion Purée

How to use: As a great thickener for pan sauces, especially those made from beef or lamb; served with grilled foods.

How to cook: Cook sliced onions with a little butter, stirring occasionally, until they're quite soft, about half an hour. For a deeper, caramelized flavor, continue cooking slowly until the onions brown.

How to purée: In a blender or a food

processor. For a perfectly smooth purée, work through a strainer, a food mill, or a drum sieve.

Embellishments: A little tomato purée or wine vinegar.

Parsley Purée

How to use: As a delicate sauce around scallops or seafood in a wide soup plate.

How to cook: Simmer a stemmed bunch in ½ cup chicken stock or, if using for seafood, fish broth or the liquid from steamed clams, mussels, or poached fish.

How to purée: In a stand blender. For a perfectly smooth purée, work the purée through a strainer or a drum sieve.

Embellishments: For a thicker, richer purée, replace half the stock or cooking liquid with cream.

Do you have a shortcut for a time-consuming cooking task, a novel use for an old kitchen tool, or an unusual way to stay organized in the kitchen? Write to *Tips*, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506. Or send your tip by e-mail to fc@taunton.com. We pay for tips we publish.

Cooling rack doubles as drainer

I use an 18-inch-long cooling rack for more than just cooling baked goods. It makes a great drainage rack when set over the sink, particularly for rinsing food that gets cramped in a colander. And since it effectively turns the sink into another work surface (the cooling rack can support a cutting board or baking sheet), it's also an efficient use of space for people who have small kitchens.

—Sheri L. Castle,
Raleigh, NC



Set a large cooling rack over the sink for a flat, convenient drainage area.

Manage dough with lightly oiled hands

When handling sticky bread dough, or any type of dough for that matter, I spray my hands with a bit of Pam or other non-stick oil spray. This keeps my hands dough-free, doesn't add any flavor, and ensures, in the case of tender pastry, that I don't overwork the dough.

—Katherine R. Perrotti,
Amenia, NY

told that the cakes I've entered in contests look very professional.

—Desiree Sigal,
Hidden Hills, CA

Resurrect polenta in a food processor

In a pinch, you can get leftover cold polenta back to its original mushy texture quickly by putting it in the food processor with a little water. Process the hardened polenta back to a purée, toss it in a saucepan to reheat, and it's like new. I did this once when I was desperate, and it worked out great.

—Steve Johnson,
The Blue Room,
Cambridge, MA

Shake off "nut dust" with a metal sieve

I love to decorate my cakes with chopped nuts around the sides. To give the cake a more finished look, I chop the nuts, put them in a metal sieve and start shaking. You wouldn't believe how much "nut dust" comes off. The nuts will have a clean and shiny look instead of a dull finish. This method works for any kind of nut. I've been

Vermouth fills in for white wine

When I need just a drop of white wine for a recipe and don't want to uncork a fresh bottle, I reach for the ver-

Two paper plates, some cookies, and a stapler

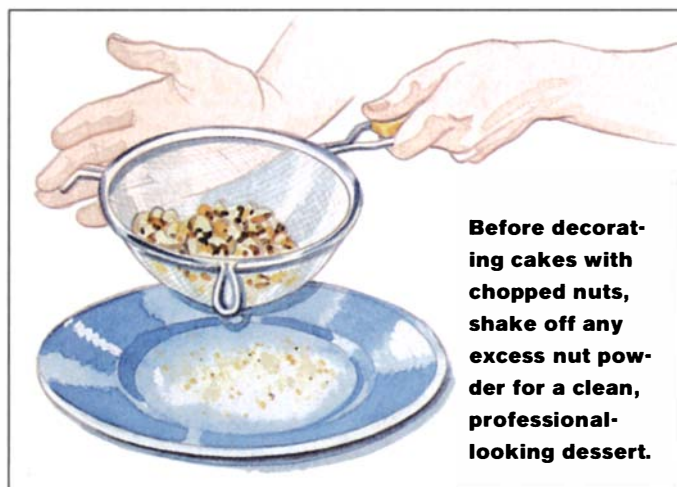
I discovered a wonderful way to store cookies (I bake a lot of them, especially around the holidays) in my freezer. I wrap them in aluminum foil and put the package between two paper plates with the bottoms facing out, like a flying saucer. I staple the rims to seal, label the package with a marker, and stack them in the freezer.

It's easy to transport tea sandwiches and canapés this way as well; they stack comfortably in a plastic supermarket bag without tipping over.

—Barbara Greene Ruskin,
Los Angeles, CA



Enclose cookies (or other fragile foods) between paper plates for neat freezer storage.



Before decorating cakes with chopped nuts, shake off any excess nut powder for a clean, professional-looking dessert.



To dress up autumn pies, use a knife to trace leaves in the extra dough. Bake the pastry leaves over oiled, crumpled foil and then arrange them on the finished pie.

mouth. It has a screw cap and lasts forever. I always keep an open bottle in the kitchen.

—Leslie Revsin,
Bronxville, NY

Leafy cutouts enhance ordinary pumpkin pies

To decorate pumpkin or sweet potato pies, I trace pretty leaves (oak and maple

are perfect) on a rolled piece of pastry and cut them out. I might even add food color to my egg wash and paint the pastry to look like fall

leaves. Then I crinkle some aluminum foil sprayed with vegetable spray, lay the pastry leaves on the foil so they look more natural, and bake them. When the pie is done, I arrange several of my fall leaves on top of my pie.

—Jan Boyd,
Victoria,
British Columbia

Soften candied ginger in a double boiler

When candied ginger becomes brittle and difficult to chop, I put the pieces in a double boiler for about ten minutes. The ginger softens to just the right consistency for slivering and finely dicing.

—Elaine Phillips,
Nashville, TN ♦



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A Thanksgiving Feast for Twelve? No Problem.

MENU

Spiced Pecans

Buttercup Squash
& Leek Soup
with Herb Butter



Roasted Turkey with
Apple Cider Thyme
Gravy

Wild Rice,
Spiced Pecan
& Apple Stuffing

Whipped Yukon Gold
Potatoes
with Horseradish

Warm Salad of
Autumn Greens

Cranberry Compote



Pear, Cherry
& Apricot Crisp

Thanksgiving dinner is tricky—you've got to please everybody with traditional favorites, but you also want the food to be special. And cooking a huge menu midweek translates into a lot of work.

That's why, when *Fine Cooking* approached me to create a Thanksgiving menu that was both elegant and do-able, I decided to tackle the job the way I would at my restaurant on Martha's Vineyard. My kitchen is quite small, and I have to be really organized. I start by making a list of ingredients I'll need, and then I make a worklist for each of the dishes I'll serve. Most important, I prioritize this list according to how far in advance each task can be done.

I did the same thing for *Fine Cooking's* Thanksgiving dinner. I developed recipes that are full of terrific autumn flavors. I prepared and served this whole menu to a group of family and friends, streamlined my recipes and worklist a bit further, and sent them along to *Fine Cooking*, where the recipes were all tested again, and the worklist and shopping list refined to make them as hassle-free as possible.

This menu is challenging—which is also why it's so delicious—but it's very do-able, and everyone from your pickiest family members to your most sophisticated guests will enjoy it. The do-ahead recipes, like the buttercup squash soup, and our tips (like keeping the potatoes warm over a water bath) will help free you up so you can cook your best and enjoy your meal.

Follow our planning,
shopping, and
cooking strategies
for a dinner full
of traditional
favorites—all with
a delicious twist

BY MICHAEL BRISSON

A successful dinner needs a clever strategy

Read over the recipes, suggested timetable, and shopping list. Then sketch out your own worklist (based on our suggestions for what can be frozen and what will keep) to suit your schedule. You can start as far as two weeks in advance.

◆ **Take inventory.** Check your pantry and cross off any staples from the shopping list that you already

A menu inspired by the best American ingredients



Sweet and spicy maple-glazed pecans double as pre-dinner nibbles and a stuffing ingredient.



Herb butter melts into butternut squash soup.



A plate bursting with American flavors to complement the moist roasted turkey: horseradish mashed potatoes; apple-cider gravy; wild rice, sourdough, and pecan stuffing; winter greens; and a cranberry compote.

have. Look at your cooking equipment, serving dishes, and tableware, and borrow whatever you need. If you'd like an extra burner at serving time, get an electric hot plate (a great way to keep gravy warm).

♦ **Think about refrigerator space.** Consider how you'll store all the raw and cooked ingredients during the week. Clean out your fridge; set up coolers for spillover; keep drinks unrefrigerated until Thursday (then ice them down in a cooler); use your garage if you can; ask a neighbor who's travelling for the holiday to lend fridge space; use flexible storage like zip-top bags and stackable plastic containers.

♦ **Ask for help.** Give a trusted friend or family member one or more of the recipes to make, or ask for help with prep work. Definitely recruit someone for Thanksgiving Day to help with tasks like chilling wines, washing dishes, or setting the table.



Finish with a warm, satisfying autumn fruit crisp.



Here's the timetable for Thanksgiving

Start early to make life easier—and the food taste better—on Thanksgiving Day.

TWO WEEKS AHEAD:

- ☐ Order fresh turkey
- ☐ Shop for nonperishables for entire menu and ingredients for soup and pecans (see Shopping, p. 33)
- ☐ Make herb butter for soup and turkey; freeze
- ☐ Make spiced pecans; freeze
- ☐ Make soup; freeze

ONE WEEK AHEAD:

- ☐ Shop for perishables to make gravy roux and cranberry compote (see Shopping)
- ☐ Make cranberry compote (without scallions)
- ☐ Make roux for gravy
- ☐ Make plum dressing
- ☐ Organize equipment and serving dishes

SUNDAY OR MONDAY:

- ☐ Shop for perishables to make stuffing, gravy, fruit crisp, and autumn greens (see Shopping)
- ☐ Wash and store greens for warm salad
- ☐ Make crisp topping

TUESDAY:

- ☐ Pick up turkey, buy ice
- ☐ Move soup from freezer to fridge to defrost
- ☐ Prep bread for stuffing

WEDNESDAY:

- ☐ Prep stuffing ingredients, mix stuffing (not eggs or extra liquid)
- ☐ Peel potatoes if you have refrigerator space
- ☐ Make and bake crisp
- ☐ Set table

THANKSGIVING DAY:

2 hours ahead of roasting

- ☐ Refrigerate or ice down beer and wines
- ☐ Peel potatoes (if not done), cover with water

1 hour ahead of roasting

- ☐ Remove turkey from fridge and herb butter from freezer
- ☐ Mix eggs and liquids with stuffing
- ☐ Stuff turkey, truss
- ☐ Put extra stuffing in dish, refrigerate

Zero hour

- ☐ Put turkey in oven (with neck), cover with bag
- ☐ Mix scallions into compote, put in serving dish
- ☐ Take roux from fridge to bring to room temp

1 hour

- ☐ Remove turkey neck from oven
- ☐ Make stock reduction for gravy

2 hours

- ☐ Take pan of extra stuffing out of fridge
- ☐ Cook, mash, and hold potatoes
- ☐ Remove plum dressing from refrigerator

2½ hours

- ☐ Put stuffing pan in oven
- ☐ Baste turkey; add extra liquids to pan

3½ hours

- ☐ Remove brown bag from turkey
- ☐ Drain and reserve pan liquids; finish gravy
- ☐ Remove cover from stuffing pan
- ☐ Check turkey temp
- ☐ Reheat soup

4 hours

- ☐ Check turkey temp, keep cooking if needed
- ☐ Remove pan of stuffing from oven (make sure it's 160°F or above)
- ☐ Put out extra pecans

4½ hours

- ☐ Check turkey again, let rest if done
- ☐ Sauté and dress greens, put on platter
- ☐ Slice and serve turkey and other dishes
- ☐ Reheat fruit crisp

RECIPES

Spiced Pecans

This recipe makes enough for the stuffing, with extra to serve as nibbles before the meal. *Yields 4 cups.*

4 tsp. salt

½ tsp. cayenne

1 tsp. each ground white pepper, nutmeg, cloves, and allspice (or 4 tsp. *quatre épices*)

4 cups pecan halves (about 12 oz.)

¼ cup butter, melted

⅓ cup dark maple syrup (or ½ cup regular maple syrup)

UP TO TWO WEEKS AHEAD:

Heat the oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl, toss together the salt, cayenne, white pepper, nutmeg, cloves, and allspice. Add the pecans and toss well. Drizzle the melted butter over the pecans and mix well. Turn out onto a rimmed baking sheet, scraping any spices and butter from the bowl and spreading the nuts into one layer. Bake until lightly toasted, stirring occasionally, about 9 min. Drizzle the maple syrup

over the nuts, stir to combine, and bake about 10 min. longer, until the nuts turn glossy and slightly dark. Let the nuts cool in the pan for 30 min. and then scrape the nuts and any maple drippings into a bowl; break up any large clusters. Reserve 2 cups of the nuts; chop the remainder very coarsely. Label and store the chopped nuts (for the stuffing) and the whole nuts (for nibbling) separately in the freezer in zip-top bags.

Wild Rice, Spiced Pecan, Apple & Sourdough Bread Stuffing

This recipe makes enough stuffing to fill the bird and to fill an extra baking dish. *Yields 14 cups.*

1-lb. loaf sourdough or peasant-style bread

2 cups raw wild rice

2 tsp. plus 1 Tbs. salt

3 Tbs. olive oil

2 medium (4-oz.) onions, cut into small dice (1½ cups)

4 large ribs celery, cut into small dice (1½ cups)

2 small cloves garlic, minced

Dress and roast the turkey

Herb butter and a paper bag yield great results



Loosen the turkey skin from the breast with a rubber spatula. Spread the herb butter under the skin with the spatula or your hands and push in the sliced garlic.



To truss the turkey, first make small incisions in the flaps on either side of the back stuffing-filled cavity.

1½ Tbs. chopped fresh sage
1½ Tbs. chopped fresh thyme
1½ tsp. white pepper
3 Granny Smith apples
2 Tbs. butter
1 Tbs. sugar
1⅔ cups apple cider
4 large eggs
¾ cup homemade or low-salt canned chicken stock
½ recipe Spiced Pecans, coarsely chopped (p. 31)

TWO DAYS AHEAD:

Trim the crust from the bread and cut the remainder into ½-inch dice to get 6 cups. Spread the bread on baking sheets to dry overnight.

ONE DAY AHEAD:

In a large pot, combine the wild rice, 6 cups water, and 2 tsp. salt. Bring to a boil, reduce to a low simmer, cover, and cook until tender and the kernels start to open, 50 to 55 min. Remove from the heat, drain if necessary, and spread out to cool on a baking sheet.

In a large sauté pan, heat 2 Tbs. oil over medium-high heat. Add the onions, sauté 4 min.; add the celery and garlic and sauté until the onions are translucent, about 4 min. Remove from the heat and stir in the herbs, pepper, and 1 Tbs. salt. Cool in a shallow dish.

Meanwhile, peel, core, and dice the apples. Return the pan to the heat and add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil and 2 Tbs. butter. When the butter sizzles, add the apples and sprinkle in the sugar. Sauté until the apples begin to brown, 5 to 8 min. Add ⅔ cup of the cider (reserve the rest), scrape up any brown bits, and let the cider reduce for 1 min. Pour the apples and liquid into the onion mixture and let cool completely.

In a large bowl, combine the rice, bread, and apple mixture. Refrigerate.

ON THE DAY OF SERVING:

Bring the stuffing to room temperature. Mix together the eggs, 1 cup cider, and chicken stock. Fold

the liquid into the stuffing mixture and mix well. It will be fairly wet. Fold in the spiced pecans. Follow the directions for stuffing the turkey and baking the extra stuffing in a pan in the Roasted Turkey recipe below.

Roasted Turkey with Apple Cider Thyme Gravy

I think a fresh organic turkey tastes best, so we've included some sources on p. 90. You can make this gravy while the turkey is roasting. *Serves twelve; yields 5 cups gravy.*

FOR THE GRAVY:

¼ lb. (8 Tbs.) unsalted butter
⅔ cup flour, sifted
3 cups apple cider
1 cup dry white wine
1 apple, peeled, cored, and diced
2 shallots, chopped (about 4 Tbs.)
1½ cups homemade or low-salt canned chicken stock; more as needed
2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme

FOR THE TURKEY:

Oil for spraying brown grocery bag
12- to 14-lb. fresh turkey (preferably organic), with neck
Reserved herb butter from Buttercup Soup (p. 34)
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 recipe Wild Rice Stuffing (p. 31)
Kitchen twine for trussing
5 Tbs. butter, cut into 10 pieces
½ cup olive oil
2 tsp. salt
1 Tbs. fresh thyme
3 cups homemade or low-salt canned chicken stock
Fresh herbs for garnish

UP TO ONE WEEK AHEAD:

In a medium heavy sauté pan over low heat, melt the butter; add the flour, whisking until smooth. Cook



Tie a piece of twine securely around one leg and thread it through both flaps. Pull the twine taut and pass the twine around the first leg again. Now loop the twine around the other leg, tighten, and then tie the two legs together securely.



Tent an oiled brown paper bag (with one large side cut out) over the turkey once you've put it in the roasting pan.



You don't have to carve at the table. Michael Brisson likes to cut away the entire breast and slice it on the bias before arranging it on a platter.

over very low heat for 20 min., stirring frequently. The roux should be a pale straw brown; if it begins to darken, remove it from the heat. Refrigerate the roux in a wide-mouthed jar or other covered container.

ON THE DAY OF SERVING:

To prepare and stuff the turkey—Bring the roux to room temperature. Heat the oven to 325°F and adjust the racks to accommodate the roasting pan and an extra pan of stuffing. Cut away one of the wider sides of a brown grocery bag and coat the underside of the remainder with oil, using a spray bottle or pastry brush. Rinse the bird with cold water inside

and out. Save the neck and discard the other innards.

Cut off the pope's nose (the tail) from the turkey and tuck the wing tips under the back of the bird. With a rubber spatula or your hands, separate the skin from the breast and spread the herb butter and garlic slices under the skin. Loosely fill the front and back cavities of the bird with stuffing. Insert a long metal fork in the middle of the stuffing in the back cavity (leaving the tip exposed; see photo on p. 32); this will help the stuffing cook faster by drawing the heat to the interior of the stuffing. Cut a slit in the flaps on either side of the cavity. Tie a 16-inch piece of twine around one leg,

Here's the shopping list for the whole menu

TWO WEEKS AHEAD:

Butcher or specialty supplier
(see Sources, p. 90):

- ☐ order fresh 12- to 14-lb. turkey (with neck) for Tuesday pick-up

Grocery:

- ☐ maple syrup (½ cup)
- ☐ beach plum or Damson plum preserves (1 small jar)
- ☐ Champagne vinegar or white-wine vinegar (¼ cup)
- ☐ chicken stock (3 quarts)
- ☐ Dijon-style mustard (1 Tbs.)
- ☐ canola or peanut oil (1 cup)
- ☐ olive oil (1 cup)
- ☐ granulated sugar (4 cups)
- ☐ wild rice (2 cups)
- ☐ white flour (2½ cups)
- ☐ rolled oats (¾ cup)
- ☐ prepared horseradish (6 oz.)

- ☐ shallots (6)
- ☐ hazelnuts (¾ oz.) or chestnuts (1 lb.)
- ☐ pecan halves (4 cups; 12 oz.)
- ☐ salt
- ☐ black pepper for grinding
- ☐ white pepper
- ☐ cayenne (½ tsp.)
- ☐ ground nutmeg (1 tsp.)
- ☐ ground cloves (1 tsp.)
- ☐ ground allspice (1 tsp.)
- ☐ ground cinnamon (1 tsp.)
- ☐ fresh chives (1 bunch)
- ☐ unsalted butter (3 lb.)
- ☐ buttercup squash (3 medium)
- ☐ leeks (1 bunch or 3 large)

Liquor store:

- ☐ dry sherry (½ cup)
- ☐ dry white wine (1½ cups)
- ☐ red or white wine for dinner (see sidebar p. 36)

- ☐ any spirits or Champagne for cocktails
- ☐ soda, juice, mineral water

ONE WEEK AHEAD:

Grocery:

- ☐ orange juice (1 cup)
- ☐ fresh cranberries (24 oz.)
- ☐ lemons (2)
- ☐ orange (1, preferably navel)

SUNDAY OR MONDAY:

Grocery:

- ☐ large eggs (4)
- ☐ light cream (1½ cups)
- ☐ apple cider (1½ quarts)
- ☐ fresh chives (1 small bunch)
- ☐ fresh sage (2 bunches)
- ☐ fresh thyme (2 bunches)
- ☐ scallions (½ bunch or 3 large)
- ☐ Yukon Gold potatoes (5 lb.)
- ☐ celery (½ bunch)
- ☐ onions (2 medium)

- ☐ Granny Smith apples (4)
- ☐ garlic (4 cloves)
- ☐ spinach (10-oz. bag or 1 lb. loose)
- ☐ red or green Swiss chard or young kale (1 bunch)
- ☐ frisée or escarole (2 small heads)
- ☐ sourdough or peasant-style bread (1 lb.)
- ☐ ripe but firm Anjou pears (7)
- ☐ clementines or small navel oranges (3)
- ☐ dried cherries (5 oz.)
- ☐ dried apricots (7 oz.)
- ☐ vanilla or ginger ice cream

TUESDAY:

Butcher:

- ☐ pick up turkey

Convenience store:

- ☐ ice, twine, brown paper bag

Make gravy as the turkey roasts

A gold roux, reduced cider, and good stock make deep, rich gravy



Make a roux (to thicken your gravy) as far as a week ahead and refrigerate. Whisk butter and flour over very low heat until a pale brown color.



While roasting your turkey, deglaze the pan with chicken stock and apple cider. Spoon the juices out of the pan an hour later (returning the turkey to the oven) and add them to an apple cider reduction to form the base of your gravy.

feed the twine through both slits in the flaps, and pull the twine taut. Wrap the twine around the other leg once, and tie the legs together securely.

Put the extra stuffing in a buttered baking dish, about 9x7 inches. Dot with the 10 dabs of butter and cover with foil. Poke 8 holes in the foil for steam and set aside in the refrigerator.

Coat the bottom of a large roasting pan with ¼ cup olive oil. Set the bird in the pan and rub it with the other ¼ cup oil; sprinkle with 2 tsp. salt and 1 Tbs. thyme. Put the neck in the pan. Cover the bird loosely with the brown bag and put the pan in the oven.

After 1 hour of roasting—Remove the neck from the oven; set aside. Begin making a stock reduction for the gravy: In a 2-qt. pot, combine 3 cups cider, the wine, apple, shallots, 1½ cups stock, and turkey neck. Boil over high heat until the liquid is reduced by half (about 2½ cups), about 30 min. Discard the turkey neck. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside. Remove the pan of stuffing from the refrigerator to let it come to room temperature for 30 min.

After 2½ hours of roasting—Put the pan of stuffing in the oven. At the same time, baste the turkey with any juices (there may not be a lot from an organic turkey) and add the 3 cups chicken stock to the pan. Continue roasting for another hour.

After 3½ hours of roasting—Remove the paper bag from the turkey. Take the turkey from the oven, set it on a hot pad on the counter, and tilt the pan to pour or ladle off all the juices into a heatproof container (when you tilt the pan, use a towel to hold a leg of the turkey to keep it from sliding). Check the



Whisk the roux into the simmering stock. Add roux as needed to make the gravy as thick as you like. If it gets too thick, thin it with a little chicken stock. Keep the gravy loosely covered on a low burner or a hot plate, and stir occasionally until ready to use.

turkey's temperature (the thickest part of the thigh should be 165°F when done, and the center of the stuffing should be above 160°F.) Return the turkey to the oven to finish roasting if needed. Remove the foil cover from the pan of stuffing. Let the pan juices sit for at least 10 min. to allow the fat to rise.

Finish the gravy. Skim the fat off the reserved pan juices and add the juices to the reduced cider stock. Bring the liquid to a simmer (skimming off any more fat if necessary) and slowly whisk in about one-third of the roux until it's absorbed and the gravy thickens. Add more roux if you like a thicker gravy or more stock or apple cider if you want it thinner. Strain the gravy (the apple will have disintegrated), and season with 2 tsp. salt and 1 tsp. pepper or to taste. Add the thyme and keep the gravy warm (put the pot, loosely covered with foil, on a hot plate if you have one).

After 4 hours of roasting—Check the turkey temperature again. Remove the pan of stuffing (it should feel firm). If the turkey isn't done yet, check in another 30 min. When the turkey reaches temperature, remove it from oven and cover loosely with a tent of foil. Let rest at least 20 min. so the juices settle back into the flesh, which will keep it tender. Or, leave the turkey in the oven, turn off the heat, and leave the oven door cracked. You can hold the turkey this way for an hour.

Transfer the turkey to a cutting board and slice. I like to remove the legs and the breast and slice the breast meat on a bias and the thigh meat into slices. Arrange on a platter and garnish with fresh herbs.

Buttercup Squash & Leek Soup with Herb Butter

I love the earthy flavor of buttercup squash, but you can substitute butternut. Note: Reserve the extra herb butter separately for the turkey. *Yields 12 cups.*

FOR THE HERB BUTTER:

1 shallot, finely chopped (about 2 Tbs.)
½ cup dry sherry
½ lb. (16 Tbs.) unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 Tbs. chopped fresh chives
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. white pepper

FOR THE SOUP:

4 cups chopped, well-washed leeks, white part only (about 3 large)
8 cups peeled, seeded, and diced (1-inch cubes) buttercup squash (about 3 medium)
½ cup dry white wine
6 cups homemade or low-salt canned chicken stock
2½ Tbs. salt
1 Tbs. white pepper
Chopped fresh chives for garnish

UP TO TWO WEEKS AHEAD:

Make the herb butter—Heat a small nonstick sauté pan over medium heat. When hot, add the shallots and heat to release their aroma and lightly toast them, about 30 seconds. Remove from the heat and add the sherry. Set the pan back on the heat and reduce the liquid to 2 Tbs., about 8 min. Let cool. In a small mixing bowl, blend the butter, chives, sherry-shallot mixture, salt, and pepper. Line a baking sheet with parchment or waxed paper and spread the butter ¼ inch thick to cover about 8x6 inches. Cover and chill. With a small cookie cutter (I use a star) or a knife, cut out 12 small shapes. Wrap in plastic and freeze; freeze the remainder separately for the turkey.

Make the soup—Put the leeks in a heavy-based nonaluminum, 8-qt. stockpot. Put the squash over the leeks; add the wine and stock. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer; cook until the squash is fork-tender, about 25 min. Let cool 15 min. Add the salt and pepper; purée in a blender (or food processor). Cover and freeze (or refrigerate up to 3 days).

ON THE DAY OF SERVING:

Defrost the butter shapes. Reheat the soup over low to medium heat, stirring frequently (or in a microwave). To serve, ladle the hot soup into shallow bowls and garnish with herb butter and fresh chives.

Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes with Horseradish

The slightly tangy horseradish flavor of these potatoes pairs well with the cider gravy. *Yields 14 cups.*

5 lb. Yukon Gold potatoes
3 Tbs. salt
½ lb. (16 Tbs.) unsalted butter
1½ cups light cream
White pepper to taste
6 oz. prepared horseradish

Peel and quarter the potatoes and cover with cold water. You can hold the potatoes this way at room temperature for 6 hours ahead of cooking (or for a day ahead in the refrigerator).

Drain the potatoes, put them in a 6-qt. pot, and cover with water. Add 1 Tbs. salt. Bring to boil, reduce to a gentle boil, and cook until fork-tender, 25 to 30 min. Pour off the water and let the potatoes cool. (If they sit in water off the heat, they'll turn pasty.)

In an electric mixer with the whisk attachment, whip the potatoes until smooth, about 1 min.; add the butter and mix until melted and combined, about 30 seconds. Add the cream, 2 Tbs. salt, and pepper; whip until smooth and creamy, about 2 min., scraping down the sides of the bowl frequently. (You can also use a food mill.) Fold in the horseradish and combine well.

To keep the potatoes warm—Put an inch of water in the pot the potatoes were cooked in and set over low heat. Put the potatoes in a mixing bowl, cover with foil, and put the bowl on top of the pot. You can hold the potatoes like this for at least 2 hours; just maintain the water level and keep the heat low.

Warm Salad of Autumn Greens with Plum Vinaigrette

Use any combination of hardy greens you like. *Serves twelve; yields 1½ cups vinaigrette.*

FOR THE PLUM VINAIGRETTE:

5 Tbs. Damson plum or beach plum preserves
¼ cup Champagne vinegar or white-wine vinegar
1 Tbs. Dijon-style mustard
1 cup canola or peanut oil
1 Tbs. chopped shallots
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

FOR THE GREENS:

One 10-oz. bag spinach or 1 lb. fresh loose spinach
1 bunch red or green Swiss chard or young kale
1 large or 2 small heads frisée or escarole
3 to 4 Tbs. olive oil or peanut oil
¾ cup (about 3 oz.) roasted, peeled hazelnuts, roughly chopped, or 1 lb. chestnuts, roasted, peeled, and quartered

UP TO ONE WEEK AHEAD:

Make the dressing—In a blender or food processor, pulse the preserves, vinegar, and mustard until smooth. Continue pulsing and slowly add the oil until incorporated. Add the shallots, salt, and pepper; pulse briefly. Refrigerate in a bottle.

UP TO FOUR DAYS AHEAD:

Prepare the greens—Stem the spinach and chard (or kale), and cut the chard or kale into strips about ½ inch wide. Cut the bottoms off the frisée or escarole. Mix all the greens, wash thoroughly, and spin dry. Wrap loosely in damp (not wet) paper towels and store in sealed zip-top bags. They should stay fresh this way for 5 days.

JUST BEFORE SERVING:

Bring the dressing to room temperature. In a very large sauté pan (preferably nonstick), heat about 1 Tbs. of the olive oil over medium-high heat and add one-third of the greens, one-third of the nuts, and a bit of salt and pepper. Sauté 1 to 2 min., stirring all the time, until the leaves are slightly wilted. Drizzle a little dressing on them, toss lightly with tongs, and transfer the nuts and greens to a serving platter. Repeat with the remaining greens in two more batches, adding only enough olive oil to the pan as needed to sauté.

(More recipes follow)



Sauté hardy winter greens quickly in small batches until just barely wilted. Add toasted hazelnuts and a drizzle of plum vinaigrette.



Sprinkle a buttery crisp topping over individual fruit-filled ramekins. Cook until brown and bubbly.

Cranberry Citrus Compote

I like this technique for cooking cranberries in the oven because the berries stay whole. *Yields 5 cups.*

24 oz. fresh cranberries
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
Finely grated zest of 1 orange
2 shallots, finely chopped (about 4 Tbs.)
2 cups sugar
½ cup orange juice
½ cup thinly sliced scallions (3 large)

UP TO ONE WEEK AHEAD:

Heat the oven to 350°F. Pick through the cranberries to remove stems or bad berries. Combine the cranberries, lemon zest, orange zest, shallots, and sugar in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Turn into a 3-qt. glass baking dish and drizzle the orange juice over the cranberry mixture. Bake, stirring occasionally, until sugar is dissolved and a few berries have popped open, about 30 min. Remove from the oven, cool thoroughly (the pectin in the excess liquid will firm up when cool), cover, and refrigerate.

ON THE DAY OF SERVING:

Remove the compote from the refrigerator early in the day to bring it to room temperature. Fold in the sliced scallions, and turn into a serving bowl.

Pear, Cherry & Apricot Crisp

You can bake this autumn fruit crisp in individual ramekins or in one large baking dish. *Serves twelve.*

FOR THE CRISP TOPPING:

6¾ oz. (1½ cups) flour
1 cup sugar
¾ cup rolled oats
½ lb. (16 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cubed and chilled

FOR THE FILLING:

7 ripe yet firm pears (I like Anjou), peeled, cored, and cut into 1-inch dice
3 clementines (or small navel oranges), peeled and sectioned
1 cup (5 oz.) dried cherries
1 cup (7 oz.) dried apricots, halved
½ cup orange juice
½ lemon, juiced
½ cup sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ cup flour
Butter for the ramekins

UP TO FOUR DAYS AHEAD:

In an electric mixer fitted with a paddle, combine all the topping ingredients and mix on low speed until large crumbs form and just begin to turn pale yellow. Refrigerate or freeze in an airtight container.

ONE DAY AHEAD:

Heat the oven to 375°F. In a large bowl, mix the pears, clementines, dried cherries, dried apricots, orange juice, lemon juice, sugar, and cinnamon. Sprinkle in the flour and mix well with a rubber spatula. Let stand for 10 min. Lightly grease 12 ramekins (about 1-cup capacity) with butter. Divide the fruit mixture among the ramekins and generously sprinkle the topping to cover the fruit. Put the ramekins on 1 large or 2 small baking sheets. Bake until the topping is golden brown and the filling is bubbling slightly, 40 to 45 min. Remove from the oven and leave at room temperature.

ON THE DAY OF SERVING:

Reheat the crisps at 300°F until hot, about 20 min. Serve warm with a scoop of vanilla or ginger ice cream.

Michael Brisson is the chef and co-owner of L'Etoile (in the Charlotte Inn) in the town of Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard. ♦

wine



choices

American wines are perfect partners for *the* American dinner

This elegant yet comforting Thanksgiving dinner gives you plenty of latitude in choosing wines that will please everyone. For this all-American celebration, drink American, too. If you can splurge a bit and uncork some truly fine bottles, you might even unglue those diehard arm-chair quarterbacks from the TV.

For the soup, bring out the buttery, roasty flavors of squash, sherry, and butter with a big, buttery Chardonnay like Ferrari-Carano or Rutz (both from Sonoma) or Cakebread from Napa. "Buttery" Chardonnays get that way through a winemaking step called malolactic fermentation, which creates a smooth,

creamy mouth-feel and the same flavor substance found in butter. Buttery Chardonnay pairs beautifully with the turkey, picking up on the apples, butter, and pecans in the stuffing, as well as with the side dishes. Except for the salad and dessert, Chardonnay covers the whole menu.

If you'd rather cut through the richness with something tart, go with a crisp Pinot Gris such as Oregon's Adelsheim or Erath. A high-end domestic sparkler such as Le Rêve from Domaine Carneros, Etoile from Domaine Chandon, or L'Ermitage from Roederer Estate will go with both the soup and the main course while adding to the festive mood.

But if you prefer red, a peppery Pinot Noir would be delicious. Look for Saintsbury Reserve of Carneros, Gary Farrell from Sonoma, Oregon's Domain Drouhin, or Fox Run from New York's Finger Lakes.

For the fruit crisp dessert, pick a wine with good, tangy acidity and sweetness to match the topping. Try Hush's late harvest Gewürztraminer from Mendocino, Vignoles from Stone Hill Vineyards in Missouri, or Château Elan peach wine from Georgia.

Rosina Tinari Wilson teaches and writes about food and wine in San Francisco's Bay Area.

Layering Flavors for the Best Chili

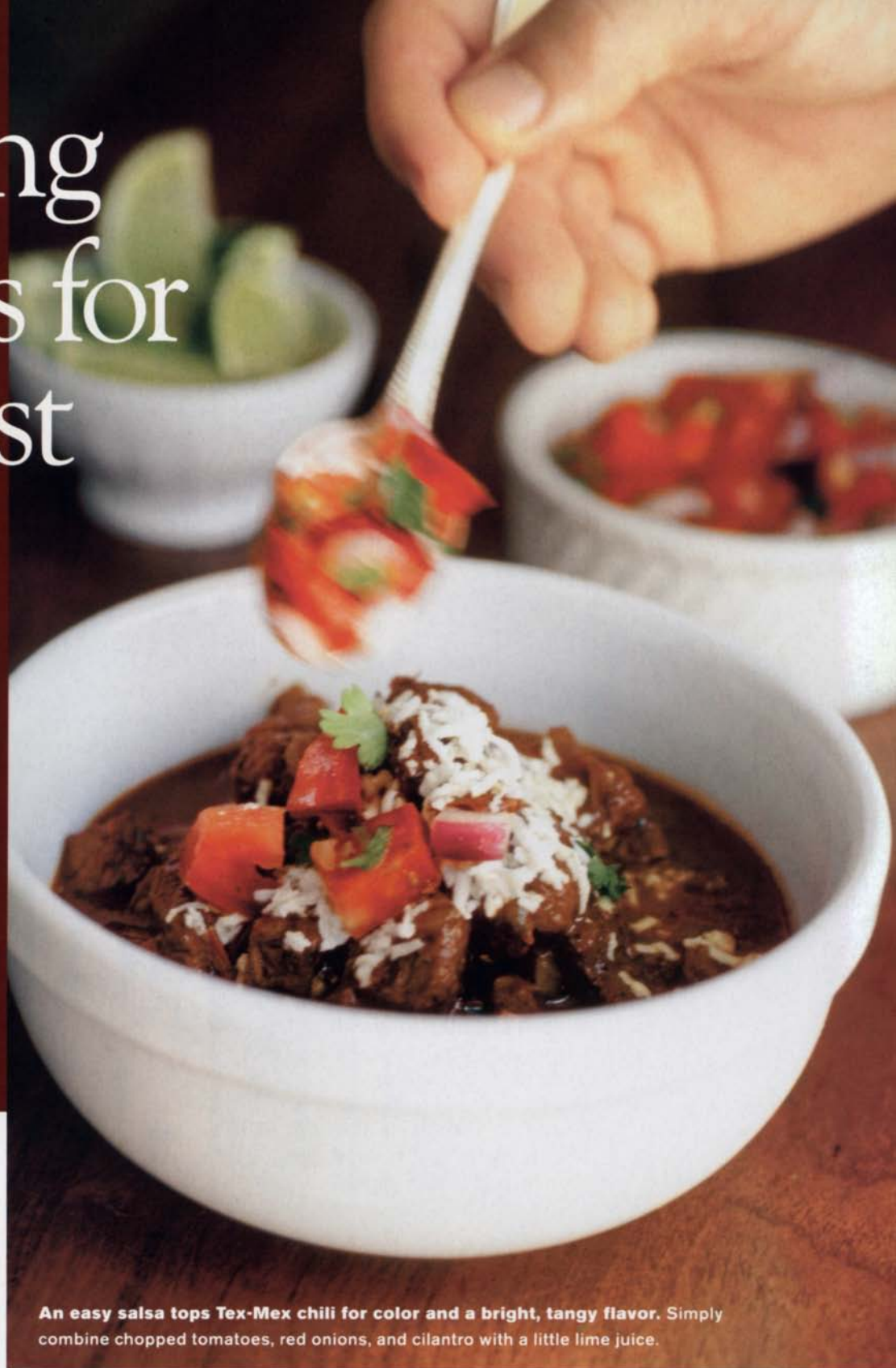
Toasting spices,
steeping chiles,
and searing
meat gives you
chili with a deep,
resonant flavor

BY BEN BERRYHILL

I'm a Texan, born and bred, which is why I would never presume to write *the* definitive recipe for Texas chili. People here have very strong opinions about the subject, and I'm the sort who would rather eat my chili than argue about it. To keep everybody happy, I offer three delicious versions. The first is a dark and spicy pork chili that was inspired by my Mexican friends; it's very close to an authentic Texan bowl of red (meaning it's all about the meat). I also love my mom's Tex-Mex beef version, which includes all those delicious yet scandalous things—onions, chocolate, beer—that chili purists disdain. And a little farther off the

path of authenticity is a pinto bean and chicken version that's my wife's favorite. (Cut her some slack: she's from Atlanta.)

The thing that makes each of these chilis so good is that I use a variety of techniques—toasting, steeping, and searing—to coax the fullest flavor potential out of key ingredients before they're even combined



An easy salsa tops Tex-Mex chili for color and a bright, tangy flavor. Simply combine chopped tomatoes, red onions, and cilantro with a little lime juice.

Chile peppers: the heart of chili

Chipotle

A smoke-dried jalapeño with a sweet, smoky flavor.



Cascabel

Small with a rich woody flavor and a tannic heat.



Chilcostle

Medium heat with an orangy sweetness and color.



New Mexico red

Also known as *chile colorado* and dried California chile; has a mild, crisp heat and earthy flavor with tones of dried cherry.



Pasilla

Also known as *chile negro*; has a deep complex flavor including berry, tobacco, and licorice tones.



in the chili pot. The result is a chili in which you discover deeper, more complex flavors with every bite.

A bowl of chili starts with chiles

According to food historian John Thorne, chili more than likely evolved from a simple stew made by American Indians of the Southwest. In this ancient dish, fresh chiles were flavored with meat. Today that relationship has flip-flopped so that a bowl of chili more likely means meat that's flavored with chiles. But chiles still play a major role in the taste of the dish.

For a deep, dark flavor, toast dried chiles; for a lighter taste and brighter color, don't. I love trying out different chiles to see what dimension they'll add to a dish. I also like to handle the same chiles in different ways to bring out different characteristics. For example, in my Mexican-Style Chili, I toast the dried chiles, which heightens the tangy, dark flavor of the *pasilla* and the sweetness of the *ancho*. In my Chicken & Pinto Bean Chili, however, I want to keep the brick-red color of the dried New Mexico chiles: I'm not looking for the intensity of flavor that toasting the chiles brings about; instead, I simply steep the chiles to rehydrate them. In the Tex-Mex Chili, I do

a little of both: I toast *pasilla* powder in the chili pot and add a couple of dried chiles along with the liquid ingredients to steep as the chili cooks. I also like to use a mix of fresh and dried chiles. The grassy flavor of fresh chiles gives the dish a bright heat that's different from the earthy heat of the dry chiles.

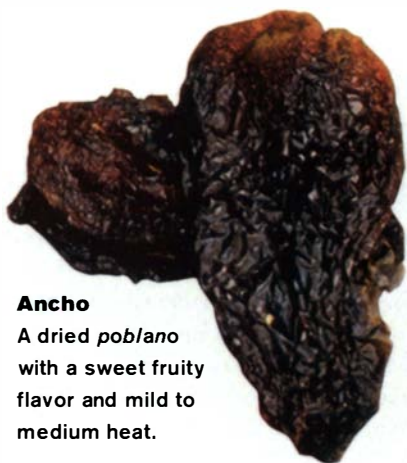
Experiment with different chiles. Sometimes you can't easily find the chile you want when you need it, especially in regions outside the Southwest, so I suggest stocking up on dried chiles as you come upon them; they'll last at least six months in a cool, dark cabinet, and they'll then be on hand when a recipe calls for them. But I also feel strongly that you shouldn't be afraid to substitute one chile for another; the outcome will be different, sure, but it will still be delicious. (To order chiles by mail, see p. 90.)

When substituting, look for chiles that share similar flavors and heat. For example, in place of *anchos*, you might try *mulatos*. The *mulato* won't be as sweet or as resonant as the *ancho*, and it's a little more smoky, but it offers a similar feel overall. A little *cascabel* chile, with its woody, nutty flavor, could replace a dried *chipotle*. Though the *chipotle* has more hints of chocolate and tobacco, both are smoky and earthy with a medium heat.



Pasilla de Oaxaca

A smoked chile; fruity and smoky with a sharp heat.



Ancho

A dried *poblano* with a sweet fruity flavor and mild to medium heat.



Toast spices—and even fresh oregano

If you've ever toasted whole spices—or nuts, for that matter—you know it's a great way to bring out the ingredient's fullest flavor. My Mexican friends turned me on to the practice of toasting fresh oregano as well. The method makes sense for oregano, one of the few fresh herbs whose flavor actually improves when dried. Lightly toasting the herb (a sort of quick-drying) makes the pleasant flavors of the oregano more pronounced while lessening some of the astringency you can find in the fresh leaves. You could simply use dried oregano, of course, but this method guarantees that the oregano will still have a fresh flavor.

Sear the meat for a tasty crust

When browning meat for chili, the pieces of meat need to touch the hot pan to color, and they need a little distance from each other or they'll steam instead of sear. In the chicken chili, I cook the chicken right in the pot, which gives the chili more flavor than simply using chicken broth or adding already cooked chicken to the pot at the end.

Finally, as with all chilis, these will improve in flavor if you let them sit for a day or so before serving.

RECIPES

Mexican-Style Chili

I like to serve this stew-like chili with warm tortillas, chopped white onion, sprigs of cilantro, slices of avocado, and grated sharp cheeses. I recommend Cotija or even an aged Cheddar. *Yields 5 cups; serves four.*

4 ancho chiles, stemmed and seeded

4 pasilla chiles, stemmed and seeded

½ tsp. cumin seeds

½ tsp. coriander seeds

1 Tbs. fresh oregano leaves or 1½ tsp. dried

1 can (28 oz.) tomatoes, drained and seeded

4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped

1 medium yellow onion, coarsely chopped

2 lb. pork shoulder, trimmed of any fat

Salt to taste

3 Tbs. vegetable oil; more as needed

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the *ancho* and *pasilla* chiles and press them flat with a spatula. Toast the chiles, turning them over, until they're fragrant and their color changes slightly, about 30 seconds. Remove the chiles from the skillet and put them in a bowl. Cover with about 4 cups of boiling water. Weight them with a plate to keep them submerged, if necessary, and soak until tender, about 30 min.

Hot water and a half-hour's steeping soften dried chiles. Once they're soft, author Ben Berryhill purées them to add flavor and body to the chili.



Toasting fresh oregano mellows the herb's astringent side. Toast the leaves just until they start to lose color and begin to curl.

Toast the spices and oregano—Meanwhile, heat a small, heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add the cumin and coriander and toast, giving the pan an occasional shake, until the seeds are fragrant, about 5 min. Grind the seeds in a spice grinder or crush them in a mortar and pestle. In the same hot pan, toast the fresh oregano (don't toast dried oregano). Remove the leaves after they've begun to dry out but before they lose all of their green color, about 3 min. Set aside.

Reserve 1 cup of the liquid from the soaking chiles and then drain them. Put the chiles and the reserved liquid in a blender. Add the toasted, ground cumin and coriander, the toasted (or dried) oregano, the tomatoes, garlic, and onion. Purée until smooth.

Cut the pork into ½-inch cubes, pat it dry, and season it lightly with coarse salt.

In a large, heavy-based skillet, heat 2 Tbs. of the oil until very hot. Brown the pork in the oil in batches (adding more oil to the pan as needed), being careful not to overload the skillet or the pork will stew in its own juices and not brown. Transfer the browned pork to a plate lined with paper towels. Drain off any ex-



An electric grinder makes quick work of grinding toasted spices. If you have the time and a good mortar and pestle, grinding the spices by hand yields more of the flavorful oils.

cess fat from the skillet but leave a light coating on the bottom and don't clean the skillet.

To the hot skillet, add the chile purée carefully; it will splatter while it sizzles. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add the browned pork, reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the meat is very tender, about 1½ hours. Add a little water to the pan if the sauce seems too thick. Season with salt to taste and serve.

Chicken & Pinto Bean Chili

New Mexico red chiles are common dried chiles found in many grocery stores. You can also use a couple of *chilcostle* chiles or tiny *cascabels* in place of some of the New Mexico red chiles for a more complex flavor. *Yields 10 cups; serves eight.*

8 dried red chiles, such as New Mexico red, stemmed and seeded

1 Tbs. cumin seeds

1½ Tbs. fresh oregano leaves or 2 tsp. dried

1 lb. dried pinto beans, soaked overnight and drained

3 medium yellow onions, chopped

2 large carrots, chopped

6 cloves garlic, chopped

3 fresh jalapeños (preferably red), stemmed, seeded, and chopped

2 lb. skinless chicken thighs

2 Tbs. salt

Shredded sharp Cheddar or Cotija cheese for garnish

Cover the chiles with about 4 cups boiling water and steep until soft, about 15 min. Reserve 2 cups of



A bean and chicken chili gets its brick color from dried New Mexico chiles. The author pulls the chicken into larger-than-bite-size pieces so it won't disappear among the beans.

the soaking liquid and then drain the chiles. In a blender, purée the chiles with the reserved liquid.

Meanwhile, toast and grind the cumin seeds and toast the oregano as described at left (don't toast dried oregano). Put the beans in a stockpot and cover them with 7 cups water. Add the chile purée, toasted ground cumin, toasted (or dried) oregano, onions, carrot, garlic, jalapeños, and chicken thighs. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, skimming any foam. Remove the chicken thighs when cooked, 25 to 30 min. When the chicken is cool enough to handle, pull the meat from the bones into large pieces and set aside; discard the bones. Continue cooking the beans until tender, another 1 to 1½ hours. Return the chicken to the pot to heat it thoroughly. Season with the salt, adding more to taste. Serve in bowls topped with the grated cheese.

Tex-Mex Chili

Pasilla powder, made from toasted and ground *pasilla* chiles, and *masa harina*, a dried corn flour, are available at some specialty grocery stores and through the sources listed on p. 90. *Yields 5 cups; serves four.*

- 1 Tbs. cumin seeds
- 1½ tsp. coriander seeds
- 2 Tbs. fresh oregano leaves or 1 Tbs. dried
- 3 Tbs. vegetable oil
- 3 lb. beef chuck, cut into ½-inch cubes
- ½ large yellow onion, chopped
- 8 cloves garlic, chopped
- 5 fresh jalapeños (preferably red), stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 3 Tbs. *masa harina*
- 2 Tbs. ground *pasilla* powder
- 2 lb. tomatoes (fresh or canned), seeded and chopped
- 1 dried *chipotle* chile, seeded
- 1 dried New Mexico red chile
- 1 bottle (12 oz.) dark beer, such as Negra Modelo
- 1 oz. unsweetened chocolate
- 4 cups water or homemade or low-salt canned chicken stock

Toast and grind the cumin and coriander, and toast the fresh oregano as described at left (don't toast dried oregano).

In a large, heavy-based skillet, Dutch oven, or stockpot, heat the oil until very hot. Brown the meat in the oil in batches (add more oil to the pan as needed), being careful not to crowd the pan or the meat will stew in its own juices and not brown. Transfer the browned meat from the pan to a plate lined with paper towels. Don't clean the skillet after browning the meat.

To the same skillet, add the onion, garlic, jalapeños, *masa harina*, *pasilla* powder, the toasted ground cumin and coriander, and toasted (or dried) oregano. Stir over medium-high heat until the onion begins to soften, 5 to 8 min. Return the meat to the skillet; add the tomatoes, whole dried chiles, beer, chocolate, and water or stock. Simmer until the meat is fork-tender, about 1½ hours. Remove the whole chiles before serving.

Ben Berryhill is the chef de cuisine at Cafe Annie in Houston. ♦



This spicy, smoky, stew-like chili is more Mexican than Texan. Soft tortillas do double duty—they take the place of a fork, and they offer relief from the chili's heat.

beer



choices

Match deep chili flavors with dark, malty beers

Serving a wine with spicy chili is like trying to tame a bonfire with a water pistol. No contest: the wine gets torched. You want to pour a substantial beer or ale instead. But forget the pale brews of summer—you need deep, rich flavor and malty sweetness to stand up to chili's firepower. Whichever chili you're

cooking, you might want to offer a few different beers. For the Mexican-style chili, a dark south-of-the-border brew, like Hussong's Cerveza Negra or Negra Modelo Dark Ale, is a natural. Or try a dark German lager from St. Pauli Girl or Beck's, or a Naked Aspen Brown Ale from Minnesota. The chicken-bean chili with its

cheese topping suggests a nut brown ale (Oregon Brewery and England's Samuel Smith make fine ones) or an Irish stout such as Murphy's or Guinness.

As for the Tex-Mex version, you can pick up on the recipe's roasted flavors with Samuel Adams Honey Porter from Boston, Saranac Porter

from New York, Devil Mountain Black Honey Ale from Ohio, or the ultimate in dark beer, Red Hook's Doubleback Stout from Seattle, which has coffee right in the brew.

Rosina Tinari Wilson teaches and writes about food and spirits in San Francisco's Bay Area.



Make your own lettuce roll-ups with stir-fried shrimp, mango, cilantro, and crisp bean sprouts. Drizzle with some hot—but not blistering—chile-ginger-mint sauce, and then wrap and roll.



Just five minutes in a honey, ginger, and soy marinade infuses these jumbo roasted shrimp with flavor.



Shrimp bread salad gets its bright character from Spanish paprika and aged sherry vinegar. Fresh basil and ripe tomatoes don't hurt, either.



Four Inspired Ways to Have Shrimp for Dinner

Whether roasted, stir-fried, or sautéed, shrimp is always fast, always available, and always delicious

BY LESLIE REVSIN



Browned butter and balsamic vinegar give these sautéed shrimp an amber glaze and appealing tang.

I don't think I know anyone who doesn't like shrimp. On sight, their friendly familiarity gets our taste buds off and running. And unlike some other shellfish, shrimp are easy to find and wonderfully versatile, taking to lots of different flavorings and cooking techniques equally well. They are happily grilled, sautéed, roasted, stir-fried, boiled (simmered, really), fried, baked, and served hot or chilled. The key concept in all methods is quick—depending on their size, they'll cook either fast or faster.

With few exceptions, the shrimp in your market's seafood case were shipped frozen and defrosted in the store. With all types, look for firm meat with a sweet, lightly briny aroma. Reject those with spotted or discolored shells, torn bodies, or a funky ammonia smell.

Frozen shrimp come in two forms. "IQF" (individually quick frozen) shrimp are loose in a bag; usually they're peeled, cleaned, and ready to cook. You just take out what you need and put the rest back in the freezer. The other option is a solid five-pound block of frozen shrimp. You can thaw as much as you want under cold water, breaking off what you need and sticking the frozen center block back in the freezer.

Choose frozen shrimp with a careful eye. If packed in transparent bags, peek inside and look for ice crystals, discolored spots, or any cottony looking edges: all telltale signs of freezer burn, which robs the shrimp of its natural juices. If you can't see inside, press on the bag, listening and feeling for a crunchy covering of ice crystals (not good). If you're buying a large box of frozen shrimp, feel around for areas that are soft or empty, signs that the box is either defrosting or may have been refrozen.

Give them space. Shrimp exude lots of liquid as they cook. Author Leslie Revsin sets them an inch apart so they'll roast rather than steam.



To defrost shrimp, either put the bag or box in a bowl in the refrigerator overnight, or slip the shrimp into a large bowl of cold water just until they defrost. Once defrosted, cook the shrimp right away or else refrigerate them and use them within three days.

Peel, devein, and then cook

Unless you're serving a shrimp boil or grilling shrimp for a laid-back get-together, peel and clean the shrimp before cooking them (see photos at right). Then cook them any way you want. Sauté them in a large, hot pan until they're lightly browned (don't crowd them). Roast them in a very hot oven on a baking sheet. Grill them, oiled and seasoned, on skewers over hot glowing coals (or in a ridged grill pan). Stir-fry shrimp in a hot wok. Simmer them in broth. Bread them and fry in oil. No matter the method, the shrimp will cook in minutes. And as soon as they're cooked through (white and opaque throughout) they're done.

RECIPES

Roasted Shrimp with Honey-Ginger-Soy Marinade

These shrimp go well with rice and sautéed snow peas or broccoli. *Serves four.*

¼ cup soy sauce
1 small clove garlic, roughly chopped
1½ Tbs. vegetable oil
1 Tbs. honey
1½ tsp. dry mustard
1½ tsp. roughly chopped fresh ginger
1½ lb. jumbo shrimp (or 1¾ lb. large) in the shell or about 50 frozen, cleaned large shrimp, defrosted
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
Thinly sliced scallions for garnish

In a food processor or blender, process the soy sauce, garlic, oil, honey, dry mustard, and ginger until the garlic and ginger are finely chopped and well combined, 1 to 2 min. (Or chop the garlic and ginger very fine with a knife and then whisk all the ingredients together in a bowl.) Set the marinade aside, or cover and refrigerate for up to several weeks.

Position the oven rack to the top level and heat the oven to 500°F. If using shrimp in the shell, peel and devein them (see photos below). If using cleaned, defrosted shrimp, skip this step. Either way, dry the shrimp well with paper towels and set aside.

Season the shrimp lightly with salt and pepper. Put them in a bowl with the marinade, tossing to coat thoroughly. Let them sit unrefrigerated, stirring once or twice. After 5 min., remove the shrimp (discard the marinade) and arrange them on a baking sheet, 1 inch apart. Put the pan in the oven toward the back; roast until the shrimp are cooked through and white throughout, 5 to 8 min. (use the shorter cooking time if using a thin pan or smaller shrimp); cut one in half to check. Sprinkle with scallions and serve immediately.

Stir-Fried Shrimp with Jalapeño-Mint-Ginger Sauce & Mango

You can omit the lettuce wrap for this dish and simply serve the shrimp with the garnishes. Fish sauce is now sold in many grocery stores in the Asian section. Serves four.

2 lb. large shrimp in the shell or about 56 frozen, cleaned large shrimp, defrosted
1 large bunch fresh mint, leaves picked
6 Tbs. seeded and chopped fresh jalapeños (4 to 6)
3 medium cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 heaping Tbs. chopped fresh ginger
1 heaping Tbs. sugar
6 Tbs. distilled white vinegar
1 Tbs. fish sauce (optional)
12 large leaves Boston lettuce or other soft lettuce
About 1 cup soybean sprouts or other fresh sprouts for garnish
About ½ cup cilantro sprigs for garnish
1 large ripe mango, peeled and sliced, for garnish
2 Tbs. vegetable oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

If using shrimp in the shell, peel and devein them (see photos below). If using cleaned, defrosted

Shrimp types you're likely to find

- ♦ **White shrimp** (actually, their shells are gray when raw) are generally considered the best quality. To me, their flavor seems clean and pure, their texture a little more satisfyingly firm than other varieties.
- ♦ **Tiger shrimp** can be close in flavor and texture to the white, and they sport charming orange or yellow stripes on their shells.
- ♦ **Rock shrimp** are always sold peeled, due to their very tough shells, and they can be reasonable in price. I find them somewhat bland, but they work fine in a highly seasoned stew or soup.

shrimp, skip this step. Either way, dry the shrimp well with paper towels and set aside.

Measure a generous ½ cup of mint leaves, somewhat loosely packed, and put them in a blender (or a mini food processor). Reserve the remaining mint leaves for garnish. To the blender, add the jalapeños, garlic, ginger, sugar, vinegar, and fish sauce (if using). Purée the ingredients until the mixture is smooth, scraping down the sides once or twice, about 3 min. Set the dressing aside (or refrigerate it overnight; bring it to room temperature before using).

Arrange the lettuce leaves, sprouts, cilantro, mango, and reserved mint leaves on a platter; set aside.

Set a wok or large skillet over high heat and add the oil. When hot, add the shrimp, season with salt and pepper, and stir-fry until they're browned outside and opaque white inside, 3 to 5 min.; cut one in half to check. Transfer to a warm platter.

To serve, bring the platters of shrimp and of lettuce and garnishes to the table. Fill a lettuce leaf with some shrimp and spoon on about 1 tsp. of dressing. Add the garnishes, roll up the leaf, and eat.

(More recipes follow)

Peeling and deveining shrimp



To peel raw shrimp, start underneath, where their legs are attached. If you like, leave the last tail segment on for looks.



Devein by making a shallow slit down the middle of the back to expose the black intestine. (To butterfly, make the slit deeper.)



Lift out the black vein with the point of a paring knife and wipe it off on a paper towel. You can also rinse it out under cold running water.

The most important step: dry the shrimp very well after cleaning and again just before you marinate or cook them. Even if they look dry, press them between paper towels to absorb every last drop of liquid.



Sautéed Shrimp with Buttery Balsamic Vinegar Sauce

Try serving this dish with orzo tossed with butter and grated Parmesan and a salad. *Serves four.*

1¾ lb. large shrimp in the shell or about 50 frozen, cleaned large shrimp, defrosted
7 Tbs. butter, cut into 1 Tbs. pieces
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ cup balsamic vinegar
2 Tbs. chopped mixed fresh herbs, such as chives, tarragon, and flat-leaf parsley
Lemon wedges (optional)

If using shrimp in the shell, peel and devein them (see photos on p. 45). If using cleaned, defrosted shrimp, skip this step. Either way, dry the shrimp well with paper towels and set aside.

Put a colander or large strainer in a bowl and set it beside the range. In a large skillet set over high heat, melt 1 Tbs. of the butter. When the butter froths, add the shrimp and season well with salt and pepper. Stir several times as the shrimp cook—they may brown slightly, which is good. They're done as soon as they're just cooked through and opaque, 3 to 5 min.; cut one in half to check. Remove the pan from the heat; transfer the shrimp with a slotted spoon to the colander. Cover the shrimp loosely with foil and set aside to keep warm while making the sauce.

Pour off all but 1 or 2 tsp. of liquid from the pan. Set the pan back over high heat and add the remaining 6 Tbs. butter, swirling the pan once or twice until the butter turns light nut brown, about 2 min. (Any

brown bits that have stuck to the pan will become even browner, but they shouldn't burn.) Immediately pour the balsamic vinegar into the pan and start scraping up the brown bits. Continue to scrape and cook until the sauce thickens somewhat and starts to appear glaze-like, about 2 min. The sauce will reduce to a scant ½ cup. Turn off the heat and stir in the drained shrimp (discard any accumulated liquid in the bowl) to coat them lightly with the sauce and briefly rewarm them without cooking any further. Taste and adjust the seasonings, if necessary. Sprinkle with the fresh herbs and serve immediately with lemon wedges, if desired.

Shrimp Bread Salad with Golden Garlic Vinaigrette

Choose the ripest, fleshiest tomatoes you can find so the bread soaks up their juices. *Serves four.*

1½ lb. large shrimp in the shell or about 42 frozen, cleaned large shrimp, defrosted
About 5 thick slices day-old country-style bread, cut into ¾-inch cubes (about 7 cups)
3 large ripe tomatoes, cut into chunks
7 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
4 tsp. finely chopped garlic
½ tsp. Spanish or Hungarian sweet paprika
2 Tbs. aged sherry vinegar (or red-wine vinegar)
1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
1 cup loosely packed basil leaves, cut in a chiffonade

Heat the oven to 350°F. If using shrimp in the shell, peel and devein them (see photos on p. 45). If using cleaned, defrosted shrimp, skip this step. Either way, dry the shrimp well with paper towels and set aside.

Put the bread cubes on a baking sheet and toast them in the oven until they've dried out and turned golden brown, 14 to 18 min. Remove them from the oven. When cool, combine the bread with the tomatoes in a large bowl. Set aside.

Set a small, heavy skillet over low heat with 6 Tbs. of the olive oil and the chopped garlic. Cook, stirring or shaking the pan frequently, until the garlic turns a pale gold, 6 to 7 min. Bear in mind that the garlic will continue to cook from the retained heat of the pan. Remove the pan from the heat, stir in the paprika, vinegar, and lemon juice. Season well with salt and pepper. Pour half of the mixture (about ¼ cup) over the bread and tomatoes. Stir well to combine and set the remaining vinaigrette aside.

Set a large skillet over high heat with the remaining 1 Tbs. of olive oil. When the oil is hot, add the shrimp, season with salt and pepper, and sauté, stirring occasionally, until they're just cooked through and opaque, 3 to 4 min.; cut one in half to check. Remove the pan from the heat. Add the remaining garlic vinaigrette to the pan, stir with the shrimp, taste, and adjust seasonings, if necessary.

Add the shrimp, thyme leaves, and basil to the bread and tomatoes. Toss and serve immediately.

Are those shrimp tiny, or just extra small?

Buying shrimp based on size can be confusing. Since there are no official guidelines for naming shrimp, one store's "jumbo" may be another seller's "large." It's a little more meaningful to buy your shrimp by count (the number of shrimp per pound), which most supermarkets supply along with the shrimp's size. Remember that the smaller the count, the bigger the shrimp.

The following chart gives approximate counts (though some markets fall outside of these ranges). Figure that 1½ to 2 pounds of large, unpeeled shrimp (that is, 26 to 35 pieces per pound) will serve four people, depending on how they're prepared.

Colossal —15 or fewer pieces per lb.	Medium —36 to 50 pieces per lb.
Jumbo —16 to 25 pieces per lb.	Small —51 to 70 pieces per lb.
Large —26 to 35 pieces per lb.	Tiny —70 or more pieces per lb.

Leslie Revsin is the author of Great Fish, Quick (Doubleday). ♦

Crispy Endive Has a Mellow Side, Too



Endive
makes a
snappy winter
salad—but grilled,
braised, or sautéed,
it's a brand-new
vegetable

BY ALAN TANGREN

Whenever I serve cooked endive to my friends, those who have only tried it raw are always intrigued by this new treat because endive is surprisingly delicious grilled, broiled, braised, sautéed, or baked.

You've probably eaten raw endive and noticed how it works beautifully in salads, bringing welcome snap and freshness to winter. But I especially love exploring the unique flavor and texture of endive as a cooked vegetable—wrapped with pancetta and then grilled, or stuffed and braised in stock—where it becomes meltingly tender and develops the rich nuttiness that the raw version can only hint at.

Store endive where it's cool and dark

At the market, endive should be snow-white, with just a little yellow at the tips. The ribs and bases should not show any browning. Heads of endive (or chicons, as they're sometimes called) that have been in the light for more than a few hours will start to turn green and may taste bitter, so when

you get them home, tuck the heads right into the vegetable crisper. Keep endive away from light and plan to use it within a few days. White heads of Belgian endive are most common, but you may run across red-edged heads, too (these taste the same as white, but heat will dull their purply-red hue).

For a salad, endive takes just minutes to prepare. Pull off any wilted or brown leaves and wipe the head with a damp towel. Wait until just before serving to slice raw endive; its cut edges brown rapidly. I like to slice the heads on the diagonal (see photo on p. 51), almost whittling them to get manageable segments with interesting shapes.

Endive to be grilled, broiled, or braised benefits from a short steam first. Follow the directions in the sidebar opposite. Be sure to use a nonreactive steamer basket (stainless steel, for example) or the endive will blacken during cooking. When cooked, endive's fibers can sometimes be a little difficult to slice with a table knife, so be sure to give your guests sharp knives.



Preparing steamed endive for stuffing

Stand steamed heads on end and peel the leaves down, keeping them attached at the base. Continue peeling until you get to the less flexible leaves and the core.

Braised Stuffed Endive

This dish is a little involved, but the homey flavors are well worth the time. Choose plump heads of endive; you'll get more generous slices. Use an ovenproof baking dish that isn't glass. *Serves four.*

8 large heads Belgian endive, steamed and cooled
(see sidebar opposite)

5 Tbs. butter

½ cup chopped onion

½ cup breadcrumbs from fresh Italian-style bread

2 cups homemade or low-salt canned chicken stock;
more as needed

¾ lb. lean ground pork

1 clove garlic, minced

5 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

¼ tsp. dried thyme

1 tsp. minced chives (optional)

Pinch nutmeg

¾ tsp. salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1 egg, beaten

2 Tbs. shelled pistachios

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Gently peel back the leaves of each steamed head of endive, making sure the leaves stay attached at the base, until you reach the less flexible leaves (see photos below). Cut away the smallest of the central leaves, chop, and set aside. Cut off the core and discard.

In a sauté pan over medium heat, melt 1½ Tbs. of the butter and sauté the onion until soft. Transfer to a



Cut off the inner leaves (reserve them) and the core to make room for a molded piece of stuffing. Chop the inner leaves and stir them into the stuffing.



Braised Stuffed Endive gets a simple sauce of reduced pan juices.

Tips for steaming endive

When you're making an endive dish that calls for grilling or braising, a preliminary steaming will help the endive cook more evenly.

- ◆ Shave off the rough bottom of each head, pull off any brown leaves, and rinse the heads under cold water.
- ◆ Be sure to use a nonreactive steamer basket (stainless steel is perfect); otherwise, the endive will discolor.
- ◆ Put four or five slices of lemon into the water at the bottom of the steamer. Bring the water to a simmer and put the endive in the steamer basket, leaving enough room between the heads of endive for the steam to circulate. Cover tightly and steam for 5 to 7 minutes, until the stems are barely tender and the leaves are soft. Set aside to cool.

large bowl; add the breadcrumbs and 2 Tbs. of the stock. Add the chopped endive, pork, garlic, half the parsley, the thyme, chives, nutmeg, salt, pepper, egg, and pistachios. Stir gently until the ingredients are well blended. Sauté a small amount of stuffing, taste, and adjust the seasonings to the rest if necessary.

Heat the oven to 350°F. Mold about ¼ cup of the stuffing into a sausage shape about 3 inches long. Repeat to make 8 sausage shapes. Position the stuffing inside the endive. Pull the leaves onto the stuffing one at a time, pressing to reassemble and secure the endive.

Butter a baking dish (not glass) that's large enough to hold the endive in a single layer and arrange the stuffed endive in the dish. Heat the remaining stock to a simmer and add enough to the pan to come halfway up the endive (about 2 cups). Dot with 1½ Tbs. butter. Cover the dish with buttered parchment or waxed paper and then a layer of foil. Bake for 35 min.; the endive are done when an instant-read thermometer inserted into the stuffing registers 160°F.

Remove the baking pan from the oven. Spoon off most of the juices to a small saucepan, leaving a little in the baking pan. You should have at least 2 cups; add more stock if needed. Boil the juices, reducing to ½ cup; this will take a little while.

Meanwhile, position a rack about 3 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler. Sprinkle the endive with the grated cheese and broil until golden, rotating as necessary. With a sharp knife, slice the endive diagonally into 1-inch rounds. Swirl the remaining butter into the reduced juices, drizzle over the slices, and sprinkle with the remaining chopped parsley.

(More recipes follow)



Reassemble the heads of endive, pressing the leaves into the stuffing with your hands.



It's okay if the pancetta unravels. You'll need to wrap it loosely anyway for Grilled Endive with Pancetta, because the meat shrinks slightly as it cooks.



Grilled or Broiled Endive with Pancetta gets a sassy kick from garlic-laced salsa verde.

Grilled or Broiled Endive with Pancetta & Salsa Verde

You can refrigerate the wrapped, oiled endive for several hours before cooking. For a delicious variation on the salsa verde, add a few salt-packed anchovy fillets. If you're grilling, cook the endive over glowing (not flaming) coals. *Serves four as an appetizer.*

FOR THE SALSA VERDE:

1 cup tightly packed flat-leaf parsley leaves
¼ cup sliced shallots (2 small)
1 to 2 cloves garlic, chopped; more to taste
3 oz. (¼ cup plus 2 Tbs.) excellent-quality extra-virgin olive oil
1 Tbs. white-wine vinegar
Grated zest of ½ lemon
1 hard-cooked egg
1 Tbs. capers, rinsed, drained, and chopped
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

FOR THE ENDIVE:

4 medium heads Belgian endive, steamed 10 minutes and cooled (see sidebar on p. 49)
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1 lemon, halved
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
16 thin slices pancetta, about ⅛ inch thick

Make the salsa verde—In a food processor, combine the parsley, shallots, garlic, olive oil, vinegar, and lemon zest. If you're using anchovies, add them, too. Add the egg; pulse briefly until just chopped. Stir in the capers. Taste and season with pepper and

with salt, if necessary. Cover and refrigerate for an hour or so before serving to let flavors develop. About 15 min. before serving, take the salsa verde out of the refrigerator to let it come to room temperature.

Cook the endive—Cut the steamed endive in half lengthwise. Cut out the tiny center leaves and the core and discard. Brush the endive with 1 Tbs. of the olive oil and season with a squeeze of lemon, salt, and pepper. Wrap each endive half loosely with two slices of pancetta (the slices may unravel as you work with them; this is fine). Brush again with a little olive oil. Start a charcoal grill or heat the broiler. Arrange the wrapped endive on the grill over glowing (not flaming) coals or close to the broiler and cook, turning several times, until the pancetta is crisp and browned and the endive is heated through, about 8 min. Arrange on a serving platter and spoon the salsa verde around the endive. Serve immediately.

Endive, Apple & Walnut Salad with Roquefort

Wait to cut the endive just until before serving—like an apple, it browns quickly once cut. *Serves six.*

1½ Tbs. sherry vinegar
Scant ½ tsp. salt
¼ cup walnut oil
1 small handful watercress (1½ oz.) or flat-leaf parsley leaves



Slicing the head on a sharp diagonal, turning as you go, gives you interesting endive shapes to toss into a salad. Stop cutting when you get to the tiniest center leaves and the core.



To prevent browning, slice apples and endive just before assembling Endive, Apple & Walnut Salad with Roquefort.

- 1 medium eating apple, such as Braeburn, Red Delicious, or Fuji**
- 4 heads Belgian endive, wiped, brown leaves removed**
- 3 oz. (¾ cup) walnuts, lightly toasted and crumbled**
- 4 oz. Roquefort cheese**
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste**

In a small bowl, combine the vinegar and salt; slowly whisk in the walnut oil. Put the watercress in a salad bowl. Quarter and core the apple, slice it ⅛ inch thick, and then cut the slices crosswise. Add

the apple to the salad bowl. Slice the endive heads on a sharp diagonal into ¼-inch-wide strips, turning the heads as you slice and whittling down to the core. Add the endive to the salad, along with the walnuts. Toss the salad with the vinaigrette and arrange on plates. Crumble the Roquefort onto each serving, finish with a few grinds of black pepper, and serve.

Alan Tangren is the head of the pastry department at Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California, where he used to be the forager. ♦

More ways with endive

Toss sliced endive with orange segments, watercress, and a simple vinaigrette.

Braise endive by halving heads lengthwise and browning them, cut side down, in a sauté pan until deep golden, along with diced carrots, onions, and celery. Add chicken stock and simmer, covered, until tender.

Sauté endive sliced crosswise over high heat in olive oil and butter with chopped fresh spinach, minced garlic, and a dash of dried red chile flakes. Serve with a squeeze of lemon.

Make endive risotto by adding a cup of sliced endive at the same time you sweat the onion.



Smear whole leaves with goat cheese or Roquefort for a delicious appetizer or snack. Fold up a slice of prosciutto and lay it inside a leaf. Or try a dollop of *crème fraîche* and caviar.



Keep the mixing to a minimum. Overmixing will pop the gas bubbles produced by the leaveners, resulting in flat muffins. Any lumps will disappear during baking.



Chill leftover batter quickly for better staying power. Cover the batter tightly with plastic wrap before popping it in the refrigerator.



Make-Ahead Batters for Muffins at Any Time

Balanced ingredients and a quick chill make batters that will last a week for delicious corn, pumpkin, or chocolate muffins



An ice-cream scoop makes quick work of divvying up the batter. A #16 ice-cream scoop, which measures about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, fills medium muffin tins just barely to the top. Look for the number on the scoop's handle. Dipping the scoop in water between filling each tin makes the job even easier.

BY KATHLEEN STEWART

Imagine enjoying a fresh-from-the-oven corn muffin with your morning coffee...at home...on a Tuesday...without mixing a single ingredient. How is that possible? The answer lies in a muffin batter that you can make on the weekend and keep in the refrigerator for up to a week. Then, whenever you're craving a muffin for breakfast or for an afternoon snack with tea, all you have to do is scoop some batter into a tin and bake.

The right amount of leavening is key

At the Downtown Bakery, we make lots of delicious breakfast pastries every morning. But even for us, making batters from scratch every day is time-consuming. I began wondering how we could make larger batches less frequently. Ideally, I wanted to

make the batters at the beginning of the week when we're less busy. Then, as the crowds thicken at the end of the week, we'd only have to bake the muffins.

We were already making a rich chocolate brownie-style muffin from a batter that's made ahead, refrigerated, and then scooped and baked daily, so I knew the concept was feasible. But when I first tried refrigerating my other muffin batters, I wasn't successful. After a few days in the fridge, the batter would become too liquid to scoop, and the muffins would come out flat and heavy. Why didn't these batters work as wonderfully as the chocolate muffins? I realized that the biggest problem was the chemical leaveners—the baking powder and baking soda—in the other batters. (The chocolate muffin has no chemical leaveners.) So I focused my experiments on the leaveners.

Leaveners give muffins lift and keep them tender. Eliminating the leaveners for these muffins was never an option. The leaveners in muffins and



Rustic corn muffins have a coarse texture that's unusually appealing.

other baked goods make them light and tender and give them lift. (Because the chocolate muffin is denser—more brownie-like than muffin-like—it works well using eggs alone as the leavener.) Getting the correct ratio of leavening seemed to be the trick to creating a batter that would store well.

Chemical leaveners work by reacting with acids to create carbon dioxide, the same gas that yeast produces. Baking soda begins to create gas when moistened. Double-acting baking powder (which most baking powders are these days) produces an initial set of gas bubbles when mixed with wet ingredients and then a second set when heated. The first reaction forms many small gas cells in the batter; the second reaction expands the bubbles to create a light texture.

The problem with trying to store a batter that contains baking soda or baking powder is that the leavening agents continue to produce gas bubbles until they're used up. Over time, those bubbles will collapse, resulting in dense muffins with little loft.

Adding more leavening helps—as long as it isn't too much. What seemed to work best was to add a little baking soda to recipes that had only called for baking powder, but I had to be careful not to add too much. A funny thing happens with chemical leaveners. Food scientist Shirley Corriher describes it this way: with too much leavening, the gas bubbles get too big, they run into each other, float to the top of the batter, and escape.

Once I added baking soda, I had to consider that it can leave a soapy taste behind. So in each recipe, I neutralized that soapy quality with acidic ingredients such as sour cream, buttermilk, yogurt, or lemon

**For a muffin batter
that keeps,
mix with a light touch.**



These rich chocolate muffins inspired other make-ahead muffin batters. They're irresistible right out of the oven with a glass of cold milk.

juice. The added acid seemed to improve the batter's shelf life. I also cut back on the liquid ingredients so that the chilled batter wouldn't liquefy over time.

Careful mixing and quick chilling also benefit the batter. Being careful not to overmix the batter (any lumps will disappear during baking) is even more essential in these muffin batters than most. Over-

mixing toughens the batter and also encourages the dissipation of the carbon dioxide.

Getting the batter into the fridge as quickly as possible will also give it better staying power. The initial reaction in baking powder occurs at room temperature; chilling the bat-

ter quickly will slow that initial reaction, allowing more gas bubbles to be created slowly over time.

With the basic batter established, you can tinker with the flavorings. As I experimented with the leavening for the pumpkin and cornmeal muffins, I also played with the flavorings. You can substitute just about any fruit purée—apple, peach, pear, apricot, banana, sweet potato—for the pumpkin. And the cornmeal muffins are wonderful with fresh blueberries in place of the cherries. You could

also make the corn muffins savory by cutting back on the sugar and lemon and by adding corn kernels and jalapeños in place of the cherries.

RECIPES

Rich Chocolate Muffins

These deeply chocolate muffins benefit from a good chocolate; I use Callebaut. *Yields about 20 medium muffins.*

10 oz. bittersweet chocolate
8 oz. unsweetened chocolate
1¼ lb. (2½ cups) unsalted butter
1 lb. (3½ cups) all-purpose flour
4½ cups sugar
12 eggs, cracked into a bowl

In a saucepan, melt the two chocolates with the butter. Cool slightly. In a large bowl, mix the flour and sugar. Whisk the eggs into the dry ingredients. Pour the chocolate into the egg mixture and stir until well blended; chill at least 3 hours. Heat the oven to 350°F. Line a muffin tin with muffin papers. Scoop about ½ cup batter into each tin so that the curve of the batter is even with the

rim of the cup (refrigerate extra batter in an airtight container for up to a week). Bake the muffins until the tops puff and crackle and are slightly soft to the touch, and a toothpick stuck in the center has moist but not wet crumbs clinging to it, about 30 min.

Cornmeal-Cherry Muffins

Medium-grain cornmeal gives these muffins a rustic texture. For a finer texture, use half fine cornmeal and half medium. *Yields about 20 medium muffins.*

3 eggs
3 Tbs. lemon zest
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
6 oz. (12 Tbs.) unsalted butter, melted
¼ cup plus 2 Tbs. vegetable oil
3 cups buttermilk
15 oz. (3⅓ cups) all-purpose flour
19 oz. (3 cups) medium (polenta-type) cornmeal
4½ tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
¾ cup sugar
1 tsp. salt
8 oz. (about 2 cups) chopped dried cherries

Heat the oven to 350°F. In a large mixing bowl, whisk the eggs, lemon zest, juice, butter, oil, and buttermilk. In a separate bowl, whisk the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, soda, sugar, and salt. Slowly pour the dry ingredients into the wet and stir until just mixed. Gently fold in the cherries. Grease and flour a muffin tin (or line it with muffin papers, preferably foil). Scoop about ½ cup batter into each tin so that the curve of the batter is even with the rim of the cup. (Refrigerate any extra batter in an airtight container for up to a week.) Bake in the middle of the oven until

firm to the touch, 30 to 35 min. Remove the muffins from the tin when they're cool enough to handle.

Pumpkin-Spice Muffins

This gently spiced muffin is also wonderful with apple or pear purée in place of the pumpkin. *Yields about 20 medium muffins.*

4 eggs
1 cup sour cream or plain yogurt
3 cups pumpkin purée (canned is fine)
1 cup packed light brown sugar
½ cup sugar
½ lb. (16 Tbs.) unsalted butter, melted
1¼ lb. (4½ cups) all-purpose flour
2 Tbs. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
3 Tbs. ground cinnamon
3 Tbs. ground ginger
Pinch cloves
Pinch white pepper
1½ cups golden raisins



A light and airy Pumpkin-Spice Muffin is soothing with a cup of tea. This versatile recipe is easy to vary: simply try another cooked fruit or vegetable purée in place of pumpkin.

Heat the oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, sour cream, pumpkin purée, brown sugar, sugar, and butter. In another bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and pepper. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet, stirring until just mixed. Gently fold in the raisins. Grease and flour a muffin tin (or line it with muffin papers, preferably foil). Scoop about ½ cup batter into each tin so that the curve of the batter is even with the rim of the cup. (Refrigerate any extra batter in an airtight container for up to a week.) Bake the muffins in the middle of the oven until firm to the touch and a toothpick inserted into them comes out clean, 30 to 35 min. Remove the muffins from the tin when they're cool enough to handle.

Kathleen Stewart runs the Downtown Bakery in Healdsburg, California. ♦

Picking a Roasting Pan to Use All Year

Essential at Thanksgiving, of course, but a heavy-duty “French roaster” can help you turn out great meals throughout the year



BY MARTHA HOLMBERG

Growing up, I'd begin our Thanksgiving ritual with a trip down to the furnace room to retrieve my mother's roasting pan: dark-blue speckled enamel, deep, and wide enough for a large turkey, but light enough to lift with one hand. I'm the one cooking the turkey now, and while I often see those blue pans at tag sales, I'm not tempted to get one, despite the tug of nostalgia they produce.

I love the idea that you can cook well with an inexpensive piece of equipment, but I think in the case of a roasting pan, heavy-duty construction is key. Unfortunately, heavy-duty doesn't come at tag-

sale prices. But you shouldn't pay a lot for a pan that will stay in the basement for most of the year. Investing in a well-designed, beautifully crafted pan can make roasting the Thanksgiving turkey easier, and can also allow you to:

- ◆ roast meats, poultry, and even fish
- ◆ make great gravy or pan sauces
- ◆ braise meats, poultry, and vegetables
- ◆ roast potatoes and other vegetables
- ◆ bake big batches of lasagne, enchiladas, shepherd's pie, or cobbler
- ◆ use the pan as a water bath for baking custards or soufflés.

Before you decide on a pan, you'll need to think about how you cook so you'll know which specific features can make a difference to you. I thought about what I really wanted from a pan, and I also

talked to several of our contributors to find out what they value in a roasting pan.

The heavier the better, as long as you can lift it

The first feature that everyone mentioned was heft. Not heavy for heavy's sake, mind you, since in many cases you'll be lifting the pan along with a multi-pound roasted something. You want good heft for two reasons: you don't want a hot and heavily loaded pan to warp, twist, or flex; and you do want even heat distribution so your precious drippings don't burn during roasting and saucemaking.

These criteria point to a couple of metal choices: heavy-weight stainless or copper. Enamel-coated cast iron is hefty, but too much so; the pan would just weigh

too much to be practical. Regular aluminum has the potential to react with acidic ingredients, and it seems to warp more, even in heavy form. Anodized aluminum can be good, but the dark interior wouldn't be my first choice, as I discuss below.

Nonstick is not an advantage. My preference in cookware is *not* nonstick (except my omelet pan). This is partly out of habit and partly out of performance concerns: if you want to deglaze (and for most roasts, you will), you need a surface that encourages the juices to adhere and develop deep flavors. Nonstick does precisely the opposite.

And most nonstick is pretty dark (as is anodized aluminum). A light surface helps you to judge the character of any juices (are they getting too dark? is the chicken juice running clear yet?). I suppose if you're using the pan to bake a mega batch of potato-and-cheese gratin, you may have a few more scrubbing issues, but none of the cooks I talked to was a nonstick booster, for the same reasons I gave.

The biggest is not the best. I want the pan big enough to accommodate the largest item I'm going to roast, and by accommodate I mean allow the food (most likely a 14-pound turkey) to fit in the pan without touching the sides and with enough space for air to circulate and brown the undersides. I also want the pan large enough to work as a water bath for eight ramekins. But I don't want it so big that when I roast a chicken or a pork loin there's so much exposed pan surface that the juices will burn. (If I'm roasting something very small, I'll just use a heavy skillet.) I fill any empty space in a larger pan by tossing in a few vegetables and hardy herbs. A more moderate size will also make the pan more appropriate to use for

Racks are controversial

A related question that always comes up around roasting pans is "Do you need a rack, too?"

Molly Stevens (*Fine Cooking* contributing editor): "I was converted to using a rack for poultry after I read Lucia Watson and Beth Dooley's article on roasting chicken (*Fine Cooking* #26, p. 30). The rack not only keeps the underside of the skin from getting flabby, but somehow the drippings stay clearer, and the fat is much easier to skim off...it's kind of weird, but it's true."

Mark Bittman (author of the new book *How to Cook Everything*, Macmillan): "The real issue in roasting pans for me is the rack—you want air circulating under whatever you're roasting or you're not really roasting it. And you want those drippings to drip."

Jim Peterson (*Fine Cooking* contributing editor and author of the new book *Vegetables*, William Morrow): "I don't use a rack because I find that it often sticks to the food. Also, without

the mass of the food to absorb heat, the roasting pan itself gets very hot and the early juices can evaporate too much and burn. I give my roasts a little bit of loft by setting them on a few quartered onions or carrots. But I did notice a cool thing in a cookware store recently: a flat rack-type thing with handles that you lay under the turkey, not to lift it off the pan during roasting, but to use to lift it out of the pan when it's done." (See Sources, p. 90.)

a shepherd's pie or a cobbler. I'd go with something about 16x13 inches. Before you decide on size, measure your oven: some wall ovens are surprisingly small.

Side height is critical, too: too low and you risk sloshing your hot liquid when braising or using the pan as a water bath; too high and the hot air can't get to the lower areas of your food during roasting. Three-inch sides seem a good compromise.

Think about shape. I'd choose a rectangular shape with rounded corners (so a whisk can reach in easily). Oval roasters are pretty and they work well with oval roasts, but they're usually not capacious enough for roasting two chickens side by side or six Cornish hens, or for fitting in a whole batch of *crème caramel*.

The last big design feature you need to make a choice on is the handles.

Given that in many cases I'll be lifting this roasting pan, loaded with a multi-pound cargo, out of a 500°F oven, my choice would be for a pan with thick, riveted, fixed handles rather than the sliding "bale" style. The fixed handles take more depth for storage, however. I'd also look for a model with a bit of flare to the rim so that I could crimp foil over the top when braising or cooking casseroles.

What I've described is called a French roaster by several manufacturers. See the chart below for some examples.

Martha Holmberg is the editor of *Fine Cooking*. ♦

Roasting pans with brawn *and* beauty

Here are three "French style" roasting pans that meet the design and construction standards discussed above.

model	size (in inches)	price
All-Clad Stainless (stainless exterior, interior, and handles)	14x11x2¾ 16x13x3	\$160 \$200
Mauviel (solid copper with stainless interior and brass handles)	14x10x2¾ 16x12x3¼	\$240 \$303
Bourgeat (stainless exterior, interior, and handles)	15¾x12½x3	\$187



**All-Clad
Stainless**



Mauviel



Bourgeat



Goat cheese comes in many shapes and sizes. Clockwise from top left: a mold-covered Pouligny-Saint-Pierre; a *taupinière* (or mole-hill) topped with whole herb leaves; an herb-covered Le Carré du Berry; fresh, spreadable goat cheese; a Picandou medallion; a Banon, wrapped in grape leaves. Center: a cylindrical Chabichou du Pitou.

Cooking with Goat Cheese

Creamy, soft, fresh goat cheese adds tang and body to everything from polenta to salad dressing

BY ETHEL BRENNAN



Before I was old enough to go to school, my adventurous parents moved us to Provence, where they set about learning the craft of making goat cheese. When we moved back to the United States in 1973, goat cheese was still practically unheard of here. That changed in the '80s, however, when goat cheese, particularly soft fresh goat cheese, became the rage. For a while, it seemed as if every salad at every restaurant came with goat cheese croutons, and that everything from lasagne to baked potatoes was being stuffed with it.

Yet instead of wearing out its welcome as simply a trendy sidekick to sun-dried tomatoes, goat cheese has become a lovingly accepted staple of restaurant and home kitchens. And why not? Mild, yet uniquely tangy, fresh goat cheese—also called *chèvre* (pronounced SHEHV)—is especially versatile in cooking. It mixes well with other ingredients, and it's wonderful in both savory and sweet preparations.

And because goat cheese is lower in fat, it doesn't have that heavy oiliness associated with many cow's milk cheeses.

Choosing soft fresh goat cheese

Soft fresh goat cheese is but one style of cheese made from goat's milk. These cheeses, which are from a few days to a few weeks old, are sweeter and milder than longer-aged types. The other basic styles—semisoft, surface-ripened, and hard aged—are generally better suited for eating out of hand than for cooking.

Sample different makers and styles. At a good cheese shop, you'll find a wide array of soft fresh goat cheeses (see photo opposite). Many are imported from France, but there are also wonderful domestic goat cheeses from local farmstead producers that are worth seeking out (see Sources, p. 61).

At the supermarket, the pickings will likely be slimmer, perhaps one or two varieties. If you have a

Tangy goat cheese marries well with earthy mushrooms. Because goat cheese won't spread as it melts, author Ethel Brennan smoothes the goat cheese layer over the entire tart before baking.



To make goat cheese spreadable, add a little cream and mash it with a fork.

A goat cheese dressing packs creamy flavor with less fat. The full flavor and thick texture should be paired with heartier greens.

choice between what looks mass-produced—gaudy plastic packaging is often the giveaway—and what looks more artisanal, go with the latter.

The most widely available fresh goat cheese is mass-produced French Montrachet. Although it may be lacking somewhat in personality, Montrachet's consistency and subtle flavor are assets in many cooked dishes.

Handle fresh goat cheese more like ricotta than mozzarella

The higher moisture content in all fresh cheeses means they melt differently than firm cheeses do. Nor will soft fresh goat cheese crisp and brown the way a Swiss or a Parmesan cheese will. Broil a crouton topped with a round of goat cheese for a few minutes and the goat cheese will hardly have changed in appearance even though its interior will be warm and meltingly smooth.

Baked goat cheese also doesn't spread the way, say, mozzarella does. For this reason, I smooth the goat cheese in a thin layer on my tart instead of sprinkling it on top to be sure there's some cheese in every bite. This ability to keep its shape when heated makes goat cheese a great candidate for fillings, such as a stuffing for a rolled chicken breast. But once you touch hot goat cheese, you'll find its shape illusory. Sprinkle goat cheese on hot pasta and it will remain in clumps, but as soon as you toss the pasta and cheese together, the cheese melts into a wonderful sauce-like consistency.

When cooking with goat cheese, note that its saltiness will vary, with imported cheeses usually tasting more salty than domestic ones. Remember to taste and adjust your seasonings to account for this.



Lemony Goat Cheese Dressing

I love this dressing with baby spinach or romaine lettuce and garlicky croutons. *Yields ¾ cup.*

3 to 4 oz. soft fresh goat cheese
⅓ cup half-and-half; more as needed
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest

In a small bowl, crumble the cheese and mash it with a fork until smooth. Add the half-and-half 1 Tbs. at a time, mixing and mashing the cheese with the fork. Stir in the salt, pepper, and lemon zest. Cover and refrigerate for up to 30 min. Stir before serving and thin with more half-and-half if needed.

Savory Mushroom Tart

Serve this tart with a lightly dressed salad and a crisp white wine. *Serves four.*

FOR THE CRUST:

6¾ oz. (1½ cups) all-purpose flour
¼ tsp. salt
¼ lb. (8 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces and chilled
4 to 5 Tbs. ice water

FOR THE FILLING:

½ lb. soft fresh goat cheese
¼ cup mascarpone cheese (or sour cream)
1 small clove garlic, minced
1 Tbs. minced chives
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

FOR THE TOPPING:

2 Tbs. butter
2 Tbs. olive oil
1 lb. mushrooms (preferably wild), wiped clean, trimmed, and thinly sliced
2 Tbs. finely chopped shallots
1 Tbs. fresh thyme leaves
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
¼ cup dry white wine (optional)

Make the crust—Put the flour and salt in a food processor. Pulse a few times to blend. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture resembles cornmeal. Add the ice water 1 Tbs. at a time and process until the dough comes together in a rough ball. Remove the dough, shape it into a disk, wrap it in plastic, and chill for 1 hour while you make the filling and topping.

Make the filling—In a small bowl, combine the goat cheese, mascarpone, garlic, chives, salt, and pepper, mixing with a fork until well blended. Set aside.

Make the topping—In a large skillet, heat the butter and oil over high heat until the butter is foaming. Add the mushrooms and shallots and cook, stirring, until the mushrooms are lightly browned. Add the thyme, salt, and pepper and cook another 1 min. If using wine, add it as well and cook until the liquid has evaporated, about 4 min. Set aside.

Assemble and bake—Heat the oven to 450°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the chilled dough into a 13-inch round. Transfer the dough to the parchment-



A little goat cheese gives polenta a creamier texture and a fuller flavor. Stir it in off the heat.

lined sheet. Spread the cheese mixture to within 1 inch of the edge. Top with the mushrooms. Fold the edge of the dough over the filling, pleating it as you go. Bake until golden brown, about 30 min. Serve warm.

Polenta with Goat Cheese & Fresh Sage

This makes a great side dish for roast lamb, chicken, or pork. Or serve it as a main course topped with some tomato sauce or roasted vegetables. *Serves six as a side dish.*

4½ cups water
1 tsp. salt; more to taste
1 tsp. unsalted butter
1 cup polenta
¼ lb. soft fresh goat cheese
1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh sage

In a medium heavy-based pot, bring the water to a rolling boil. Add the salt and butter. Slowly whisk in the polenta. Continue to cook over high heat, whisking constantly, about 5 min. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for another 15 min., whisking frequently. The polenta should be thick and creamy. Remove from the heat and stir in the goat cheese and sage. Taste and add more salt, if needed. Pour the polenta into a warm serving bowl and let stand for a few minutes, allowing it to firm up slightly before serving.

Ethel Brennan, an author and food stylist based in San Francisco, wrote Goat Cheese: Delectable Recipes for All Occasions (Chronicle) with her mother, Georgeanne. ♦



A great bed for roasted vegetables. Goat cheese polenta gets firmer as it cools.

Sources for soft fresh goat cheese

Fresh goat cheeses are made by artisanal cheese-makers across the country. Although most of the producers below will sell their cheese by mail, some only sell to retailers or local outlets. Seek out a producer near you.

Brier Run Farm
 Birch River, West Virginia
 304/649-2975

Capriole, Inc.
 Greenville, Indiana
 (near Louisville, Kentucky)
 812/923-9408

Coach Farm
 Pine Plains, New York
 518/398-5325

Laura Chenel's Chèvre Inc.
 Sonoma, California
 707/996-4477

Redwood Hill Farm
 Sebastopol, California
 707/823-8250

Rollingstone Chèvre
 Parma, Idaho
 208/722-6460

The Squire Tarbox Inn
 Wiscasset, Maine
 207/882-7693

Vermont Butter & Cheese
 Websterville, Vermont
 800/884-6287

Westfield Farm
 Hubbardston, Massachusetts
 978/928-5110



Tame a sticky dough with a brief rest, a thorough knead, and a long rise for tender bread with a crisp herbal crust

Baking a Flatbread with an Inlay of Herbs

BY MAGGIE GLEZER

There are all sorts of flatbreads called focaccia, ranging from dense, cakey squares to topped, pizza-like rounds. One of the best I've ever eaten was in a small neighborhood bar in Italy where my husband and I once stopped for a quick lunch. A sheet pan of thick focaccia, just brought over by the local baker, sat on the counter next to the cash register. Sprinkled with salt, pocketed with little pools of olive oil, the bread was amazing and just what we wanted.

Back home, I craved more—but I also wanted to add my own twists. So I created my ideal flatbread, light and thick enough to be split for sandwiches, with

Mix and rest the dough



Combine the flours and yeast in a large bowl. Add the water and oil; mix with your fingers just until combined smoothly. The dough will be wet and sticky. Cover the bowl with plastic and let rest for 15 to 20 minutes. After this rest (called an *autolyse*), mix in the salt.

Photos: Ben Fink

Turn out the dough and knead with a squeeze and a flip



Knead on an unfloured work surface.

To knead, squeeze the dough vigorously between the thumbs and index fingers of both hands. Move along the length of the dough, squeezing hard enough to make holes where your thumbs and fingers meet.



The dough will be sticky, but don't add flour—use a dough scraper instead. Flip and repeat, squeezing along its length.



Continue squeezing and flipping for 5 to 10 more minutes. Ideally the dough will come together and feel smooth, but if it's still sticky, don't worry—the texture will improve during fermentation. Transfer to an unoiled bowl and cover with plastic.

During the fermentation, turn the dough twice



After 30 minutes, lightly flour the dough's top and the work surface and then turn the dough out of the bowl. Gently spread the dough to flatten it but not to completely deflate it.



Fold the dough into a tight square package, folding top down, side over, bottom up, and side over as you'd fold a handkerchief. Return it to the rising bowl, covered with plastic, for 30 minutes. Repeat this flattening, flouring, and folding.



Let the dough ferment for 2 to 3 more hours, until doubled in volume and full of large bubbles. It should spring back when you press it.

a thin, crisp crust. I used durum flour, a kneading technique I learned from a European master baker, and an herb-lamination technique that I developed to get an attractive inlay of herbs in the top crust. The result is as beautiful and as delicious as the process is satisfying.

Durum flour for tenderness and flavor

I'm using durum flour here because I love the results: bread that's tender and light, with a direct, almost buttery wheat flavor and an appealing yellowy hue. You've eaten durum flour in pasta—actually pasta is made from semolina, a coarser, granular grade of

durum—but what I use here is flour made from double-milled durum semolina. Though durum wheat is considered “hard” (the double-milling is necessary because the grain is so hard), durum flour is tender because its gluten is actually very weak compared to wheats milled for bread. I also add some all-purpose flour to lighten the dough and get a softer, moister bread.

A short rest, a short knead, and a long rise

I knead this dough by hand because it's just too small an amount for a mixer, and besides, it's really

Shape the dough; roll a thin sheet



Pull the dough out of the bowl, flour it well, and tuck the edges in to make a smooth package. Don't pop the bubbles, but do tighten. Flour, cover with plastic, and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes.



With floured hands, gently press and stretch the dough into a 10x6-inch rectangle that's a scant inch thick. Transfer to a sheet of floured parchment. Flour the dough again.



With a slender, floured rolling pin, roll out one-quarter of the long side of the dough, making a thin flap to cover the thicker, unrolled portion of the dough when folded over. Press with the rolling pin where the thin sheet joins the dough to make a sharp demarcation. If needed, use more flour to keep the dough from sticking. Moisten the thick half of the dough with water.

satisfying to start off with a wet, goopy dough and end up with a smooth, satiny ball that's easy to shape. A short rest called an *autolyse* comes right after mixing the flour, yeast, oil, and water. It will cut down on your kneading time and allow the dough to bake into a lighter bread with a more open crumb. Here's how an *autolyse* (pronounced ah-toh-LEEZ) works.

- ◆ It allows the flour time to fully absorb the water, so the dough is less sticky when you knead it.
- ◆ It helps the gluten to both bond and break down, resulting in a dough that's quicker to knead and easier to shape.
- ◆ It gives the yeast time to rehydrate fully so you don't end up with yeast bits in the dough.

You'll notice in the recipe that the salt goes in after the *autolyse*. This is because salt causes gluten to contract and toughen, preventing the gluten from absorbing as much water and thus fully benefiting from the *autolyse*.

Knead with a squeeze and a flip

Bakers have so many different opinions about kneading. Here's a great technique I learned from Lionel Vatinet, a French master baker in San Francisco. It's quick and elegant. The dough develops fast, but there's actually a minimum of body motion involved with maximum results. And the great thing is that it

works just as well on four or five pounds of dough as it does with the pound or so we're kneading here. You may have trouble at first (the dough may be sticky and loose), but after a few times practicing with this wet and sticky dough, you'll find this way of kneading is faster and more thorough than any other.

Squeeze and flip. Hold the dough with both hands. Starting with the part closest to you, squeeze the dough, extruding it through the space between your thumb and index finger. Once you've squeezed all the way through, move up the dough so you squeeze oblong-shaped holes along its whole length. Then, when the dough looks like it's been hole-punched, you flip it over to smooth it out, and squeeze again. Lionel stresses that it's the squeezing that really strengthens the gluten. You'll feel the work in your hands.

Persevere. The first couple of times you try, the dough may still be sticky and loose after 10 or even 15 minutes of kneading. This is okay: just proceed to the long rise, which makes the dough more manageable. With a little practice, your dough will look as smooth as the dough in the photos.

A long rise improves the bread's texture and flavor. This recipe contains a small amount of yeast to give the dough a long, slow fermentation. This extra

A thin sheet of dough keeps the herbs green during baking.



Dip the herb leaves in water (shake off excess droplets) and arrange them on the thick portion of the dough. It's okay to crowd the leaves a little (they'll spread a bit after rolling), but don't overlap them.

rising time lets the dough build up lots of flavor. The long rise also gives you a dough that's more extensible—meaning it's less likely to rip during shaping—and that bakes into bread with well-formed air holes (or “crumb structure”).

I like to shape the dough on a sheet of floured parchment so I don't have to move it once it's shaped. Also, baking the dough right on the parchment eliminates the need for a peel. Don't worry—in a 450°F oven, parchment will darken, but it won't burn.

An herb inlay for garnish and flavor

The laminating technique I'm using here was inspired by a story I actually saw in *Fine Cooking* by Alan Tardi on handkerchief pasta with an herb inlay (#13, p. 54). I combined this technique with the classic French *tabatière*, or tobacco-pouch shape. I roll out a thin lid of dough from the main piece, blanket the main piece with herbs, and then laminate it with the thin sheet of dough.

Use one kind of herb, or a mixture. I love the way a mixture of herb leaves looks, but for pure flavor, I prefer one kind of leaf, such as rosemary or sage. I've tried just about every kind of herb you can find and they all work well; just remember to remove twiggy stems, which will poke through. Resinous herbs such as rosemary or sage have stronger, clearer flavors that will make more of an impact. More delicate herbs such as parsley and basil look pretty but taste subtler.

(Continued)

Enclose the herbs in the dough



Fold over the thin sheet of dough to cover the herb leaves completely. Tuck the edges under and pat gently to push out any air bubbles.



Starting from the short end, roll lightly with a floured rolling pin until the herbs come into sharp relief but have not popped through and the trapped air is expelled. Be gentle during rolling, even though you'll end up deflating the dough, and aim for an even shape.

Season, dimple, and bake



Sprinkle flour on the dough and cover with plastic. Let proof until thicker and puffy, about 2 hours. To test, press the dough: the indentation should fill in slowly. An hour before the end of the proof, put a baking stone in the top third of the oven; heat the oven to 450°F.



When the dough is fully proofed, brush off the flour with a dry pastry brush and then smear with a thin layer of olive oil (about 1 tablespoon).



Dimple the loaf all over with your fingers, poking in between the herb leaves, pushing down to the bottom of the dough without breaking through. Sprinkle with coarse salt. Transfer the parchment and dough to the hot baking stone.

Dimpling is for more than just looks. By poking the dough with holes, you're keeping the flatbread flat (otherwise it would balloon in the oven). Dimpling also creates delicious wells of olive oil, flavoring the bread even more. Remember that when it comes time to dimple the bread, you'll be poking deep into the dough, but not clear through to the other side.

This flatbread likes a short, hot bake. A short bake keeps the crust thin, and it helps the inlaid herbs stay green. The high heat helps the dough to expand quickly, before the crust has time to set, for the lightest possible bread. The bake is so short that if you want to double the recipe, the second shaped loaf can wait while the first one bakes. Although you can cool this flatbread on a rack, you may not want to—it's irresistible when it's warm, and I think it tastes best that way.

Bake the dough on the parchment until deep golden all over, about 15 minutes, rotating after 10 minutes. The parchment will darken in the oven, but it won't catch fire. Transfer the bread to a rack and enjoy soon: it's best still warm.



RECIPE

Durum Flatbread with Pressed Herbs

It's easy to double this recipe if you want to make more than one loaf. The bake is quick, so you can let the second loaf sit and wait its turn while the first is in the oven. *Yields one 10x6-inch flatbread.*

FOR THE DOUGH:

5½ oz. (1 cup plus 3 Tbs.) unbleached all-purpose flour

5½ oz. (1 cup plus 3 Tbs.) durum flour, also called extra-fancy pasta flour (see Sources, below)

¼ tsp. instant yeast (such as Red Star's QuickRise, Fleischmann's Bread Machine Yeast or Rapid Rise, or Saf Instant)

1 cup lukewarm water

1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more for topping the loaf

1 tsp. salt

A mix of herb leaves, such as rosemary, thyme, sage, flat-leaf parsley, summer savory, oregano, and chives (about 1 cup, loosely packed)

Coarse salt

For the procedure, follow the photos and captions starting on p. 62.

Maggie Glezer is at work on a book on artisan bread-making across America. ♦

SOURCES FOR DURUM FLOUR

Be sure to ask for extra-fancy pasta flour or farina grade, rather than semolina:

Great Valley Mills (800/688-6455)

King Arthur Flour Baker's Catalogue (800/827-6836)

Exploring the Oysters of the Pacific Northwest

The best oyster-eating is in Washington State in winter—but you can find these terrific oysters on a menu near you

BY JOANNE McALLISTER SMART

It's about two-thirty in the morning, raining and cold, and I'm pulling on thigh-high rubber boots. My bed was warm and cozy, and I'm exhausted from flying across the country and then driving for a few hours in a downpour to tiny Shelton, Washington. Yet here I am getting into Bill Taylor's truck and trying not to yawn. It's no one's fault but my own. I could have just gone to Seattle to do a story on the great oyster-eating there. But I wanted to see the oysters.

Bill Taylor is the owner of Taylor Shellfish Farms, one of the biggest shellfish farms in the country. Earlier in the evening, I had met Bill and his wife, Nicole, for dinner at Xinh's Clam & Oyster House (360/427-8709), a restaurant in Shelton that Taylor opened to show off his oysters as well as the Asian cooking of Xinh Dwelley, a champion shucker and longtime Taylor employee. The meal was delicious, as were the oysters.

Now we're driving to one of the beaches where Taylor's harvesters gather the oysters. The reason for the odd timing is the tides. In late fall, low tide hits in the wee hours. Pulling up to a spot not far from his house on the Totten Inlet,

Fresh, crisp oysters on the half shell. For oyster lovers, these plump, glistening bivalves are best unadorned.



beach farther away. Across the bay we can see the lantern lights from another company's crew moving slowly in the night. With the wind, the rain, and my oversize hood, it's hard to hear what Taylor is saying. He holds the lantern down toward the sand, and suddenly I realize we're not alone. Strwn along the beach are thousands and thousands of oysters. Much as I had dreaded heading out tonight, I'm glad I came—the sight is amazing.

Taylor puts down the lantern and tells me that most of his crew has given up carrying lanterns and that they now wear mining lights strapped to their heads. Instead of a large, soft circle of light, they get a more focused beam. The headlamp means one less thing to carry, but it also makes the work a little less social—the light has become individual, no longer shared.

Taylor picks up a giant oyster and shucks it. The meat of the oyster shines and glistens in the wet light. I'm hoping he doesn't offer it to me—I'm oystered out for the night. He lets it drop back down and we head along the beach back to his truck.

The next day—after a long (sunny) drive and a ferry ride to Seattle—I'm sitting down to enjoy some oysters and a well-deserved beer. Then a funny thing

happens when I taste my first oyster: I'm transported back to the oyster bed I visited the night before. The oysters—crisp, cold, salty, and oddly refreshing—share the same qualities as that rainy beach. But now that I'm dry and well rested, I can totally enjoy them. Seattle-based seafood consultant Jon Rowley has described oysters similarly, if more eloquently: "When slurped—cold, plump, and vibrant from its shell—the oyster, like an icy gust of wind from the bay, wakens the spirit."

Have a Hama Hama or slurp a Skookum

If you want to learn about oysters, Washington State is a great place to start. In Seattle, the city that launched our national obsession for coffee and helped spread the enthusiasm for microbrewed beer, the spotlight has turned to oysters. At oyster bars throughout the city, patrons appreciate, even celebrate, the different flavors, sizes, and textures of (mostly) locally harvested oysters. As more of these oysters of the Pacific Northwest make their way to oyster bars across the country, it's becoming easier to experience the pleasures of tasting tiny Olympias (or Olys, as those in the know call them), mild and buttery Kumamotos, and smoky-sweet Skookums all



Olympia
Very small with a robust flavor and a mild coppery aftertaste.

Kumamoto
Smooth, buttery texture with a fruity flavor in a deep, fluted shell; great for beginners.

Pike Place Market

Seattle's food frolics

There's plenty to do and see in and around Seattle, especially for people interested in food and wine. For starters, there's the famous Pike Place Market, along Western Avenue, which some call the soul of the city. Dating back to 1907 as a farmers' market, it's now home to fishmongers, butchers, bakers, and restaurants, as well as shops, most of them food related.

Favorite stops in the area include Sur La Table, which is filled with every kind of kitchen implement you can think of (206/448-2244); DeLaurenti, an Italian deli (206/622-0141); The Spanish Table, which imports all kinds of wonderful food products from Spain (206/682-2827); and Seattle Cutlery, which has great prices on knives (206/441-8988). Nearby wineries include Chateau Ste. Michelle (425/488-1133) and Columbia (425/488-2776), both of which offer tours.

on the same plate. Before we know it, we may all find ourselves discussing the merits of different oyster-growing methods, debating which drink goes best with bivalves, and pledging allegiance to favorite oyster bars, as aficionados in Seattle already do.

The Pacific Northwest is the nation's leader in oyster production, playing host to more species than any other region in the world. The major species include the Olympia, the only oyster native to the Northwest; the Pacific, varieties of which make up most of the area's oysters; the European Flat (often mistakenly called Belon after a similar European oyster); and the Kumamoto, a popular recent import from Japan. Even the Eastern oyster—native to the East Coast—is being cultivated out west.

Among these species are more than sixty varieties of oysters. What makes one variety different from another includes the oyster's stock, how it was grown (on racks, on long lines suspended in water, in suspended trays, on the beach), and where it was grown (like wine appellations, the common names of oysters usually signify where they're from). Other variables that can affect flavor, shell structure, texture, and color include seasonal changes and the types of salts and other nutrients in the water.

An abridged guide to oysters of the Pacific Northwest

If you thought all oysters tasted the same, try ordering a sampler plate that contains oysters of different species and regions—you'll be surprised by how much they can vary. Then, to fully appreciate your oysters on the half shell, leave the hot sauce and lemon on the table. Pick up the unadorned oyster in its shell and bring it to your mouth. This way you can feel the shell and take a good look at it (some are actually quite pretty). More important, when you slurp the oyster this way (as opposed to using a fork to lift it out of its cup), you also get to enjoy the oyster liquor that a good shucker will preserve in the shell.

Photographed on these pages and listed below are just some of the oysters you might encounter in Seattle or at oyster bars near you that wisely offer these delicious mollusks.

Chelsea Farms: From the Eld Inlet, a mild oyster that's briny with a clean ocean finish.

Hama Hama: Mild with a firm, crisp texture and hint of saltiness.

Judd Cove: Medium and firm, with a fresh cucumber finish.

Penn Cove: Very firm and plump beach-grown oyster with a pleasing salty flavor.

Quilcene: Crisp, mildly salty, coppery.

Skookum: Plump, with a smoky-sweet flavor.

Samish Bay: Crisp, full taste with a firm, deep cup; a great late-season pick because of its northern breeding grounds.

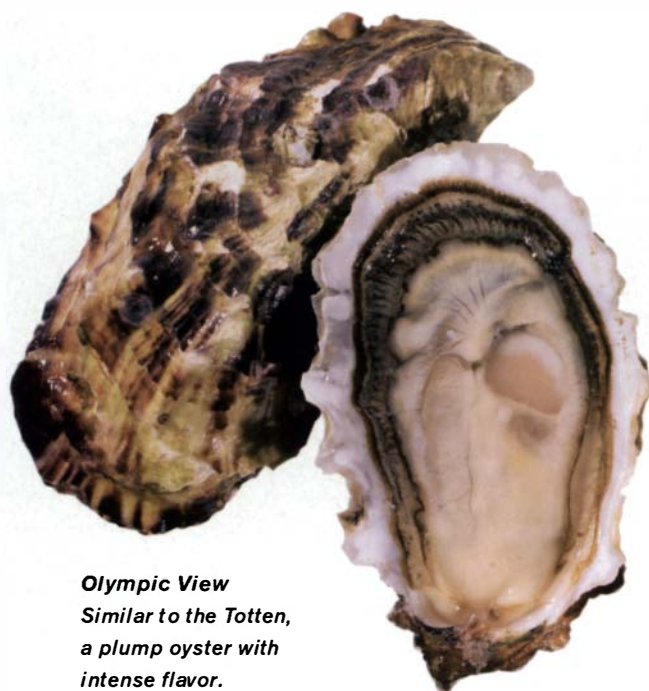
Sund Creek: Mildly salty with a watermelon-like finish.

Sunset Beach: A delicate texture with a mild finish, from the Hood Canal.

Westcott Bay

Petite: Plump and nonsalty, with a sweet finish, from the San Juan Islands.

Willapa Bay: Mild, clean, and sweet.



Olympic View
Similar to the Totten,
a plump oyster with
intense flavor.



Totten Inlet
Plump and full-
flavored, from the
southern Puget
Sound.

Many of these variables are prompted by shellfish farmers, like Bill Taylor, who decide where and how to grow their oysters. In fact, only a small fraction of oysters in the region (Taylor estimates about 5 percent) would be considered “wild.” Yet there’s little controversy when it comes to the notion of farming oysters, a practice that has been around since ancient times. And, unlike that other Seattle favorite, salmon, there’s no difference in flavor between a cultivated oyster and a “wild” oyster—both lead pretty passive lives.

What to look for in an oyster bar

As with coffee and beer before it, the oyster enthusiasm that has taken hold in Seattle is spreading fast. Oyster bars are cropping up around the country (two have recently opened in New York City) and many restaurants are showcasing oysters prominently—often featuring those from the Pacific Northwest. In

fact, the number of oysters being shipped from Washington has increased from 1.8 million in 1990 to 12 million in 1997. “The restaurants that are doing it right have done the research,” notes Alon Aleshire, co-owner of the Brooklyn Seafood, Steak & Oyster House in Seattle. “They know how to ship them and how to handle them once they’re in the kitchen.”

Aleshire is talking primarily about safety. Whether they’re being flown across the country or trucked down the road, oysters need to be maintained at a consistently cold temperature to keep them alive and to keep harmful bacteria at bay.

While you *can* eat oysters in months that don’t have the letter R in them, you probably don’t want to. The summer months are when most of the species farmed in the Northern Hemisphere are spawning, which means they’re milky and soft—fine for cooking, but not the best texture for eating raw. (During the summer, restaurateurs often ship in oysters from New Zealand and Chile.)

As far as safe oyster-eating goes, Washington-grown oysters are just about your best bet. The state, a world leader in shellfish monitoring, has a model program for certifying clean waters and healthy oysters for the half-shell market. And these cold-water



Dosewallips

*A favorite “shooter”
(served raw on the half
shell), it tastes as light
as the mountain air
that surrounds
the Olympic
Peninsula.*

oysters don't carry the *Vibrio vulnificus* bacteria that's found in Gulf of Mexico oysters, and which poses a rare but significant threat. Still, there are some people who should not eat raw oysters (or other raw fish), including pregnant women, the very elderly, those with liver disease, and those with compromised immune systems.

The rest of us can hedge the odds in our favor by looking for clues that the restaurant—whether in Seattle, Chicago, or Cherry Hill, New Jersey—knows how to handle oysters in the safest possible manner. Below are some questions to ask yourself—and your waiter—before you place your order at the raw bar.

Are a lot of oysters being ordered? “Frequent deliveries and quick rotation of oysters are one of the keys to safe oysters,” notes Jon Rowley. Under the right circumstances, oysters can have a shelf life of up to two weeks, but better restaurants will serve you oysters much fresher than that. Restaurants that go through a lot of oysters are more likely to serve you fresh ones.

Are the oysters served very cold? A very tangible way to know if your oysters are being treated with respect is their temperature. They should feel cold. Even better, you should be able to see that they're kept on ice (many bars display their oysters) and that they're served that way, too. Bacteria multiplies when it's in the danger zone of over 45°F. (Con-



Careful shucking frees the meat but keeps the juice, called oyster liquor. Here the shucker gently cuts the muscle holding the oyster to the shell.

versely, you're always safe eating cooked oysters, a different beast entirely from raw oysters but not without merit.)

Is the restaurant knowledgeable about oysters? The establishment's appreciation of oysters should be evident in many ways. One example: the art of oyster shucking is demonstrated and performed by a skilled, personable shucker who is quick and efficient. Another example: You're given ample information regarding your oyster selection from a knowledgeable waiter or from reading

the menu (preferably both). At the Brooklyn Oyster House, for instance, you can learn a lot about your oyster from the menu: the oyster's common name, its Latin genus, its species, where and how it was grown, and what it should taste like. (For more information on species and varieties of oysters, as well as their flavors, see the sidebar on p. 69).

At Elliott's Oyster House in Seattle, which, like the Brooklyn, shucks about 6,000 oysters a week and offers a dozen or so varieties, the menu also shows which beers or wines are oyster-friendly by a little sketch of an oyster next to the libation. (For specific drink suggestions, see below.)

Do the oysters come from reputable growers? A good oyster bar is very knowledgeable about its oyster sources, and managers will have a connectedness to their sources that's evident in the way the restaurant markets the oysters.

You can always ask for the shipping tag, which indicates the type of oyster, its harvest location, the harvest date, and the shipping date. “A high-quality establishment will be proud to produce the tag quickly,” says Jon Rowley. “If the staff doesn't know what you're talking about, you're in the wrong place.”

But if you're in Seattle, chances are, you're in the right place.

Joanne McAllister Smart is an associate editor for *Fine Cooking*. ♦



drink

choices

What to drink with oysters

Most people will tell you that the proper match for oysters is a stout or a porter. Kevin Shoemaker, general manager of Elliott's Oyster House in Seattle, suggests taking a sip of Guinness with an oyster in your mouth, “It's like putting your foot in the softest, most comfortable leather loafer,” he rhapsodizes. “Your whole body feels good.” At first, these

full-flavored beers may seem too assertive for the delicacy of an oyster, but the match is made in heaven. The stout's intensity and acidity seem to bring out the salty-sweet flavors of the oyster.

As for wines, what you want is a dry, crisp white. “Nothing beats a glass of bubbly, period,” says wine expert Rosina Tinari Wilson,

a contributing editor to *Fine Cooking*. The saltiness of the oyster stimulates the bubbles in the wine, what Wilson calls “a pretzels-and-beer effect.”

Most Chardonnay wines are too full-bodied for oysters. Instead try a Sauvignon Blanc or a Chenin Blanc. Each year food and wine writers, restaurateurs, and wine merchants choose the

best Pacific Coast wines to drink with oysters. Among 1998 winners for Sauvignon Blanc were wineries Kendall-Jackson, Chateau Souverain, Buena Vista, Guenoc, and Kenwood. Oregon winery Erath won for its Pinot Gris, Washington Hills and Dry Creek with dry Chenin Blanc, Hedges Cellars with a Fumé Chardonnay, and Covey Run with a Fumé Blanc. —JMS



**Check out our
web video.**

Abby Dodge shows how
to roll, shape, and finish
pies on *Fine Cooking's*
web site:
www.finecooking.com

Baking Classic American Pies

Team a flaky but manageable dough with flavorful fillings for anxiety-free holiday pies

BY ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE

I teach baking classes throughout the year—fancy tortes, tricky tarts, involved cakes, delicate custards. But I've always noticed that students get the most freaked out when it's time to make simple pies. Just mention pie crust to most cooks and they cringe—I call it pie anxiety. Will the dough roll out without cracking? Will the crust bake up tender or flaky enough? Will the filling be thick and ample? Will I get a great-looking, tasty slice of pie?

Armed with a few tricks and pointers, pies can be problem-free and delicious. I've developed a supple, easy-to-



**Counterclockwise
from top left:**
Chocolate Pecan Pie,
Pumpkin Praline Pie,
Pear Raisin Pie, and
Apple Cider Pie.



Roll the pie crust between sheets of parchment.

"The paper keeps you from over-flouring," says Abby Dodge. "It also protects the dough so you can move it around often and easily, keeping your hot hands from warming the nicely chilled dough."

handle dough, flavor-packed fillings, and, as a bonus, toppings that give flavor twists to the traditional apple, pear, and pumpkin pies I love to serve at Thanksgiving. I'm including a southern guest in the mix, too: Chocolate Pecan Pie. Sure, it's a break with tradition, but I always find myself wishing for just a little chocolate on Thanksgiving.

Mix an easy-handling crust that comes out both tender and flaky

The dough I'm using here is soft and easy to roll out, but it still turns out tender and flaky. I've added a bit more water than most pie doughs call for, and I've used about half the weight of the flour in total fat. You could go to a higher fat-to-flour ratio, but too much fat can make the dough fragile and difficult to manipulate.

For a flaky crust, make sure butter, shortening, and liquids are very well chilled. If you have a hot kitchen, chill your flour, too. Here's why.

♦ *Cold fat creates steam, thus flaky layers.* According to food scientist Shirley Corriher, cold fat melts slowly in the hot oven, giving the dough a chance set



Lift the paper every few passes of the rolling pin to check for sticking. Dust with a little flour if needed.



Roll the dough around the pin to transfer it easily to the pie pan.

on either side of it. When the fat does start to heat up and melt, the resulting steam puffs layers apart, creating flakiness. Shortening, with its higher melting point, helps the fat stay firmer longer.

♦ *Cold liquid stimulates less gluten formation.* Strong gluten is good for bread, but it makes pie crusts tough.

Add a little lemon juice to the dough, too, because the acid can help shorten the gluten as well.

Use a food processor for quick, hands-free mixing. The goal is to quickly combine ingredients and cut in the fat with a brief pulsing, just until the mixture is crumbly. This way, you don't overwork the dough, warm it with your hands, or add more water—all of which can make pie crust tough and chewy.

Parchment is key to fearless rolling

Fear of rolling seems to be the main complaint I hear from students in my classes. My secret: roll the dough between large (24x16-inch) lightly floured sheets of parchment (see the photo on p. 74).

Roll from the center out, turning the paper clockwise a little after each roll. If the paper buckles or curls, lift it and dust with flour. For a crust that's even all over, ease up slightly on the pin as you near the edge to prevent a flattened edge. And if the dough gets too warm, just slide the dough and paper onto a baking sheet and into the refrigerator for 10 minutes.

You needn't roll a perfect round. A circle is an unnecessary goal, because you'll trim the dough when it's in the pie pan. Just make sure your rolled-out shape is about a 14-inch-diameter round and about 1/8 inch thick for a 9-inch pie pan.

Now comes a real pie anxiety moment—getting the crust into the pan.

So, now you've got this thin, beautifully rolled out pie crust: what if it rips or creases on its way to the pie pan? Loosely rolling the dough around the pin and slowly unfurling it over the pan eliminates what can feel like acrobatics; it's much smarter than lifting bare-handed. This pie crust recipe allows you to transfer easily.

As you ease the dough into the pie pan, press it gently against the bottom and sides. Avoid stretching or pulling the dough—this is often why pie crusts shrink back during baking. Pie weights, which keep the crust from puffing as it bakes, are essential. No reason to buy fancy ones—tin foil filled with dried beans or raw rice works just fine.

The recipes starting below give plenty of dough and filling to line a 9-inch Pyrex pie pan, the only kind I use. I like to see the bottom crust browning through the glass. And since I always use the same size, I know exactly how much dough and filling I need (having too much filling—or not enough—is really annoying).

RECIPES

Classic Pie Crust

For rolling tips, review the photos on p. 74. This dough keeps in the freezer for 3 months. *Yields enough dough for one 9-inch double-crust pie.*

11¼ oz. (2½ cups) all-purpose flour

1 Tbs. sugar

½ tsp. salt

¼ lb. (8 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut in ½-inch pieces

¼ cup cold vegetable shortening, cut in ½-inch pieces

2 tsp. fresh lemon juice

3 oz. (¼ cup plus 2 Tbs.) very cold water

Put the flour, sugar, and salt in a food processor; pulse briefly to combine. Add the butter and shortening; pulse just until coarse crumbs form, about 30 seconds. Add the lemon juice and water. Pulse just until moist crumbs form. Turn the dough onto a work surface and gently shape it into two equal disks about 4 or 5 inches in diameter. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate at least 1 hour or up to 1 day.

For a one-crust pie—Roll one disk of dough between two large pieces of lightly floured parchment. Roll into a 14-inch-diameter round that's 1/8 inch thick. Remove the top sheet of parchment. Gently roll the dough around the pin and position the pin over the pie pan. Unroll, gently easing the dough into the pan, gently but firmly pressing the dough against the sides and bottom, taking care not to pull or stretch. With scissors, trim the edge of the dough, leaving a 3/4-inch margin from the outer edge of the pan. Tuck this dough under to shape a high edge crust that rests on top of the rim. Pinch-crimp as in the photo below.

For blind baking—Follow the steps for a one-crust pie (above). Freeze the crust for at least 30 min. Heat the oven to 425°F. Line the frozen crust with a large piece of foil, fill with pie weights (or dried beans or rice), and bake 12 min. Remove the foil and weights and continue baking the shell until golden, about 8 min. longer, checking for bubbles (push them down gently with the back of a spoon).

For a double crust—Roll out one disk of dough as for a one-crust pie and line a 9-inch pie pan, leaving the excess hanging over the side. Cover loosely with plastic while you roll out the other disk between parchment. Load the filling into the shell. Brush the edge of the bottom crust with water. Roll the top crust around the pin and position it over the pie. Gently unroll, centering the dough over the filling. Press the edges together and, with scissors, trim both crusts so they're 1/2 inch larger than the outer edge of the pie pan. Tuck this dough under to shape a high edge crust that rests on top of the rim. Pinch-crimp as in the photo at right. With a paring knife, slash two or three vent holes in the top crust and bake following the recipe directions.

For a lattice crust—Roll out one disk of dough as for a one-crust pie and line a 9-inch pie pan, leaving the excess hanging over the sides. Cover loosely with plastic while you roll out the other disk between parchment into a rectangle that's slightly larger than 14x9 inches. Remove the top sheet of parchment. Trim the dough to an exact 14x9-inch rectangle. Cut 12 strips that are 14 inches long and 3/4 inch wide. If the dough gets soft, slide the parchment and dough onto a baking sheet and chill briefly before continuing. On a parchment-lined baking sheet, arrange 6 strips horizontally, setting them 3/4 inch apart; these will be the "bottom" strips. Set the rest aside on a separate piece of parchment; these will be the "top" strips. Make the lattice following the photos on p. 76. If the dough warms up as you work, chill it briefly in the refrigerator.

(More recipes follow)



Fluted, not fussy.

To pinch-crimp, press toward the center of the pie with the thumb and index finger of one hand and press out, right between them, with the index finger of the other hand.

How to assemble a prefab lattice crust



1 Read the text on p. 75 to get set up. Fold back every other bottom strip, starting closest to you. Slightly right of center, lay one top strip vertically.



2 Unfold the folded strips and fold back the other three strips. Lay a second top strip $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to the left of the first.



3 Unfold the folded strips. Now fold back alternating strips on the right, starting at the top. Lay a strip $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to the right of the center strip; unfold the folded strips. Repeat left and right with the rest of the strips.



4 Dab a little water between the strips where they overlap, pressing gently to seal. Cover loosely with plastic and put the baking sheet in the fridge for 20 minutes.



5 Remove the lattice from the fridge and put your palm under the parchment at the center of the lattice. Lift the paper and invert the lattice onto the filling.



6 Trim the crust, leaving a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch margin from the edge of the pie pan. Press the edges together, fold them under, pinch-crimp (see photo p. 75), and bake.

Pear Raisin Pie

If you don't have any bourbon on hand, use brandy or skip the alcohol altogether. *Yields one 9-inch pie.*

FOR THE LATTICE CRUST:

1 recipe Classic Pie Crust (p. 75)

2 Tbs. milk

3 Tbs. finely chopped walnuts mixed with 1 Tbs. sugar

FOR THE FILLING:

3 lb. firm, ripe pears, like Bartletts, peeled, cored, cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch slices, and then halved

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup raisins

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup packed dark or light brown sugar

1 tsp. grated lemon zest

2 tsp. fresh lemon juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cinnamon

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground cloves

Pinch ground mace

Pinch salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup bourbon

3 Tbs. cornstarch

Position racks in the low and middle spots of the oven and set a foil-lined baking sheet on the lower rack to catch any drips. Heat the oven to 425°F.

Make the filling—In a large saucepan, combine the pears, raisins, brown sugar, lemon zest, juice, cinnamon, cloves, mace, salt, and all but 2 Tbs. of the bourbon. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring gently until

the sugar is dissolved and the pears begin to release some liquid, about 4 min. Mix the cornstarch with the remaining 2 Tbs. bourbon; add this to the pears. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently, and cook until the liquid is clear, about 1 min. Cool the filling to room temperature.

Assemble the pie—Meanwhile, roll out one disk of the dough and line a 9-inch pie pan. Trim the excess to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from the plate's outer edge. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside. Roll out the other disk and assemble the lattice as directed above. Remove the plastic from the bottom shell and fill it with the cooled pear mixture. Transfer the lattice to the pie, sealing as described above. Brush the lattice with the milk and sprinkle the nut and sugar mixture over the pie. Bake at 425°F until the pears are just tender when pierced with a knife, 50 to 55 min. If the lattice browns too quickly, tent the pie with foil.

Apple Cider Pie

This is one of my all-time favorites. *Yields one 9-inch pie.*

FOR THE DOUBLE CRUST:

1 recipe Classic Pie Crust (p. 75)

3 Tbs. heavy cream

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar cubes (about 12 small), coarsely crushed

FOR THE FILLING:

3 lb. Golden Delicious or Gala apples, peeled, cored, cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch slices, and then halved crosswise

⅔ cup apple cider
½ to ⅔ cup packed light brown sugar to taste
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
3 Tbs. cornstarch

Make the filling—In a large nonreactive pot, mix the apples, all but 2 Tbs. of the cider, the brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring often, until the sugar has dissolved and the apples are evenly coated. Mix the cornstarch and remaining 2 Tbs. cider into a paste; add this to the apples. Stirring constantly, boil until the liquid is thickened and clear, about 1 min. (you're not cooking the apples, just thickening the juices). Taste and adjust seasonings if needed. Remove from the heat and let cool.

Assemble the pie—Position racks in the low and middle spots of the oven. Set a foil-lined baking sheet on the lower rack to catch drips and heat the oven to 425°F. Prepare a double pie crust in a 9-inch pie pan and fill the shell, as directed on p. 75. Brush the heavy cream over the top crust and sprinkle with the crushed sugar cubes, pressing lightly to secure the chunks. Cut at least three vent holes. Bake on the middle rack until the crust is golden and the apples are tender when pierced with a knife, about 55 min. If the top starts browning too quickly, tent the pie with foil.

Pumpkin Praline Pie

Chill this pie overnight to let the flavors marry and mellow; serve slightly chilled. *Yields one 9-inch pie.*

½ recipe Classic Pie Crust (p. 75)

FOR THE PRALINE:

½ cup packed dark brown sugar
1 Tbs. unsalted butter, softened and at room temperature
1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh ginger

FOR THE FILLING:

1⅔ cups canned pumpkin purée
⅔ cup packed dark brown sugar
4 tsp. all-purpose flour
1½ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground ginger
Pinch ground cloves
Pinch salt
3 large eggs
1 cup heavy cream
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

Roll out the dough for a one-crust pie, line a 9-inch pie pan, and chill it in the freezer for 30 min. Position a rack in the middle of the oven; heat the oven to 425°F. Line the pie shell with foil and fill with weights. Bake until the crust's edge is golden brown, about 10 min.

Make the praline—Meanwhile, in a bowl, mix the sugar, butter, and fresh ginger until well blended. Remove the beans and foil from the crust; crumble the praline evenly over the bottom. Bake until the sides of the crust are golden brown and the praline is bubbling and dark brown, about 12 min., checking for bubbles (press them down gently with the back of a spoon). Remove from the oven. Reduce the heat to 325°F.

Make the filling—In a bowl, whisk the pumpkin, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, ground ginger, cloves,

and salt until smooth. Add the eggs, cream, and vanilla extract; whisk until just blended. When the praline has hardened but is still warm, pour the filling into the crust.

Bake until the edge of the filling looks slightly dry and the center jiggles slightly when the pan is nudged, 45 to 50 min. Cool on a rack. Refrigerate overnight.

Chocolate Pecan Pie

For extra sheen, brush the top of this pie with a little maple syrup just before serving. *Yields one 9-inch pie.*

½ recipe Classic Pie Crust, baked blind (p. 75)

FOR THE FILLING:

2 Tbs. cold unsalted butter, cut in chunks
2 oz. unsweetened chocolate, finely chopped
1¼ cups light corn syrup
¾ cup maple syrup
3 large eggs
1 Tbs. Kahlúa or other coffee-flavored liqueur
5¾ oz. (1½ cups) pecan halves, toasted



Position a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. In a large saucepan, heat the butter, chocolate, corn syrup, and maple syrup over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, whisking frequently. The mixture will bubble vigorously once it starts to boil. Continue whisking and cooking until the mixture emulsifies, about 5 min. Let cool and then whisk in the eggs one at a time. Add the Kahlúa. Pour the mixture into the baked pie shell. Arrange the pecan halves randomly on top of the filling. Bake until the filling's edges are puffed and the center jiggles like Jell-O when you nudge the pie pan, 40 to 45 min. Cool on a rack and serve at room temperature.

A sprinkling of crushed sugar cubes adds sparkle and sweetness to Apple Cider Pie.

Abby Dodge is a pastry chef and cookbook author. ♦

Add flavor to soups and stews with a *bouquet garni*

Among the first things I learned to make as a prep cook were *bouquets garni*—little bundles of herbs and spices tied together with twine or wrapped in cheesecloth. I added these packets to soups, stocks, sauces, braises, or any other dish with a lot of liquid and a long simmer.

My restaurant days are over, but I still use this technique at home. A *bouquet garni* (pronounced boo-KAY gahr-NEE) keeps all my herbs together, making them a cinch to remove (so I don't have to fish for the bay leaf before serving a stew, for example).

Parsley, thyme, and bay leaf are the standard trio. I use four or five parsley stems, a sprig or two of thyme, and a bay leaf.

Other aromatics can give your dish a more complex flavor. A few whole cloves add a touch of warmth and sweetness; a strip of citrus zest en-

hances meat-based stews and braises; a sprig of rosemary, sage, or savory sets a Mediterranean tone; and a garlic clove is a welcome addition to almost any selection of herbs.

You can tie a *bouquet garni* with twine, but if you're using small spices like peppercorns or cloves, or if you're worried about thyme leaves getting

into a clear soup, you should bind everything in a more secure wrapping. Cheesecloth is ideal (some chefs call this kind of *bouquet garni* a sachet), but leek leaves or wide celery ribs also work. If the leek leaves are especially thick and difficult to fold, soften them first by dropping them briefly in boiling water or zapping them in the microwave.

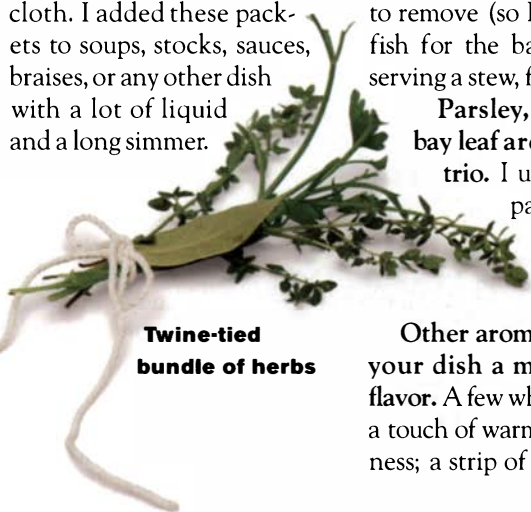
Some cooks leave a few inches of twine on the *bouquet garni* and tie the end to the pot handle so it's easier to retrieve. I prefer to let the packet swim freely; sometimes I bury it toward the bottom of the pot to extract the most flavor.



Cheesecloth sachets



Celery bouquet garni



Twine-tied bundle of herbs

Poaching vs. simmering vs. boiling

The more delicate the food, the more gentle the heat

Simply stated, the difference between boiling, simmering, and poaching is just a matter of degrees. At 212°F, boiling is the hottest of the three methods. Next is simmering, in the 185° to 205°F range. Finally, there's poaching, the most gentle method, from 160° to 180°F. But you don't have to consult a thermometer to tell the difference—your eyes are all you need. The real issue for the cook is matching each method to the right food.

Poaching requires the most finesse of the three methods. Keeping the temperature constant takes practice as well as a burner that can hold a very low heat. We poach the most delicate of foods, like eggs, fish, fruit, and some organ meats. Part of the nuance of poaching is knowing when the liquid (water, stock, or wine, for example) has reached the right temperature. The surface of the liquid should just shimmer with the possibility of a bubble.

The food must be completely submerged, which is why some recipes suggest covering the food with parchment. (Covering the pot with its lid would quickly raise the temperature to a simmer.)

Simmering is ideal for braises, stews, soups, stocks, or any food that needs a high but gentle heat. High-protein foods like meat and poultry fare much better when simmered, since the proteins are less apt to toughen and dry out at low temperatures. Meat cooks more slowly, giving you more control and a longer window to gauge doneness. Simmering is also essential for naturally tough cuts, like pot roast, where the slow, gentle heat melts the connective tissue into succulent gravy. A simmer, sometimes called a gentle boil, is characterized by the slow, small bubbles that periodically rise to the



poaching



simmering



boiling

surface. The gentler and slower the bubbles, the lower the temperature. You can simmer with a lid, but remember that the temperature inside the pot will rise, and the simmer can easily turn into a boil.

Most people can recognize a liquid at a full boil by the vigorous bubbles that rise to the surface and break. The high temperature and turbulence of a boil disperse the starch in pasta or cook sturdy vegetables like green beans and beets. But the high heat can easily overcook food, making vegetables limp and meat tough—ever wonder what gave boiled dinners such a bad name?

What are giblets, anyway?

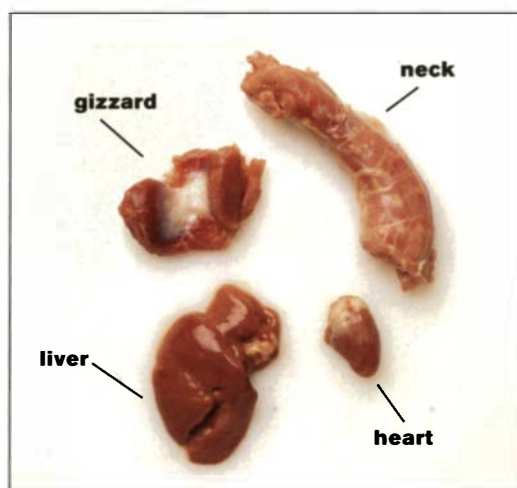
Don't throw out that giblet bag! I know it's tempting (who wants to deal with a weird hodgepodge of poultry parts?) but giblets are full of rich flavor, and it's a shame to let them go to waste. I use them to make a quick stock or to enrich gravies and stuffings.

The giblet bag usually includes the heart, liver, gizzard (a part of the bird's stomach), and neck, but you may find more (or less) than one of each in your bird. The heart and gizzard are sturdy enough to be braised, sautéed, simmered, or even made into confit. The more delicate liver is best quickly sautéed. If you have a surplus of chicken

livers, they'll make a fine *pâté*.

To make a stock, cover the neck, gizzard, and heart with cold water in a saucepan, add chopped carrot, onion, and parsley stems, and simmer for 40 to 60 minutes. Strain, reserving the giblets, and you have a flavorful stock to use as a base for pan gravy or to freeze for later. If you're making giblet gravy, pull the meat from the simmered neck bones and dice the gizzard and heart. Add them to the gravy during the final minutes of heating.

To add the gizzard and heart to stuffing, trim any membrane, like the thick, ridged skin connecting the halves of the gizzard. Once



cleaned, sauté the gizzard and heart and add them, diced, to the stuffing before baking.

The liver also lends itself to stuffings and gravies. Separate the halves, remove any membrane, and trim discolored

areas. Then sauté it, chop it, and add it to the stuffing or gravy at the same time you're adding the heart and gizzard.

Molly Stevens is a contributing editor to *Fine Cooking*. ♦

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Have you ever had a cake that rose beautifully, but five minutes before it was to come out of the oven, it fell in the center? You might think that when cakes or muffins fall or are heavy, they need more baking powder, but often the opposite is true: the problem may be too much leavener.

I get phone calls about overleavening problems every week, and a colleague with a call-in cooking show says this is one of the problems she hears about most frequently. Someday I'll go through a stack of cookbooks to see just how many recipes are overleavened.

Baking powder and soda must be in balance

By leavening, of course, I mean baking soda and baking powder, not yeast.

Baking soda is sodium bicarbonate, which when heated breaks down to form some carbon dioxide gas and sodium carbonate—a salt with a soapy taste. However, the major gas production occurs when baking soda combines with an acid. In this case, a milder tasting salt is left behind.

Baking powder contains baking soda and the exact

amount of acid to balance the soda, along with some cornstarch to keep the two active ingredients separate and dry.

When you have too much of either of these chemical leaveners, the gas bubbles in the batter get big, bump into each other, become huge, float to the top, and then *pop*—there goes your leavening.

So what is the correct amount of leavener? In most recipes, 1 to 1¼ teaspoons baking powder per cup of flour provides ideal leavening (see the chart below). Some baked

goods with a lot of heavy ingredients, like a carrot cake, may need a little more leavening, but not much.

In most recipes, baking powder is preferred because of its reliability (it contains exactly the right amount of acids to completely neutralize all the soda, leaving no after-taste) and because of its double action (one acid dissolves when water is added, producing bubbles, and another acid does not dissolve and produce leavening until a higher temperature is reached in the oven). Sometimes you'll see a double-acting baking powder with only one acid in the list of ingredients. This product may use encapsulation, like time-release cold pills, to produce leavening at different times.

Baking soda is normally used in recipes that contain acidic ingredients such as sour cream, buttermilk, brown sugar, or chocolate. You need to remember, though, that the soda isn't just neutralizing acids: it's also making bubbles, and it can easily overleaven.

These cakes are from identical recipes except for the leavening: the cake in the foreground got an extra 1½ teaspoons baking soda and buttermilk instead of milk. The extra alkalinity also made the cake browner (see *Fine Cooking* #27, p. 88).

Too Much Leavening Can Make Baked Goods a Flop

Muscle-man soda is often the culprit. Frequently, overleavening is caused by an excessive amount of soda. Many cooks and recipe writers don't realize the strength of baking soda. A whole teaspoon of baking powder contains only ¼ teaspoon baking soda as its major active ingredient.

Solving the mystery of the concave cake

A test kitchen asked me about a cake recipe that called for adding boiling water to the soda, letting it stand, and then combining it with other ingredients. Sometimes the cake worked, and sometimes it fell. What we figured out was that the recipe had too much soda, but if the cook allowed the soda to stand long enough with the boiling water, enough of the gases came off to prevent the cake from falling. If it didn't stand long enough, the cake was badly overleavened and fell. Recipes like this are tricky, to say the least.

Shirley O. Corriher, a food scientist and a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, is the author of the award-winning Cook-Wise (William Morrow). ♦

Chemical leavener needed per cup of flour

These ratios are good to remember so you can evaluate recipes before you try them and so you can successfully tinker with or create your own recipes.

For nonacidic recipes:

1 cup flour 1 to 1¼ tsp. baking powder

For very acidic recipes:

1 cup flour ½ tsp. baking powder **and** ⅛ tsp. baking soda

(Note: Baked goods with a lot of heavy ingredients, like carrot cake, may need a tiny bit more leavening.)





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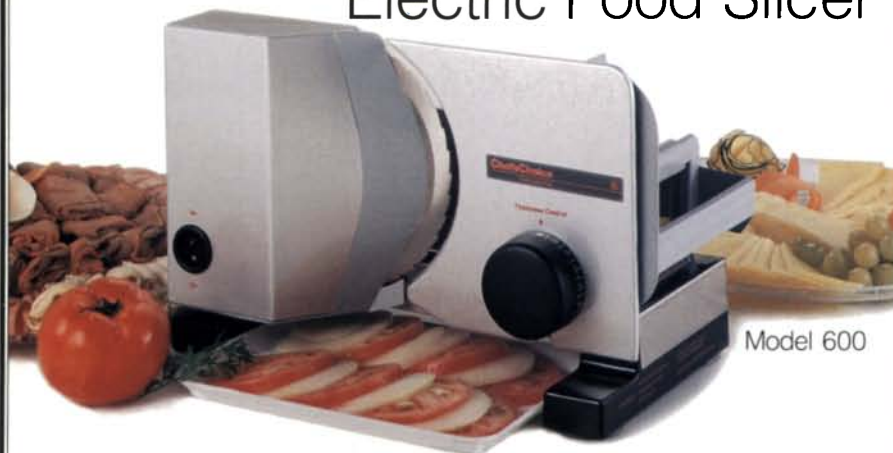
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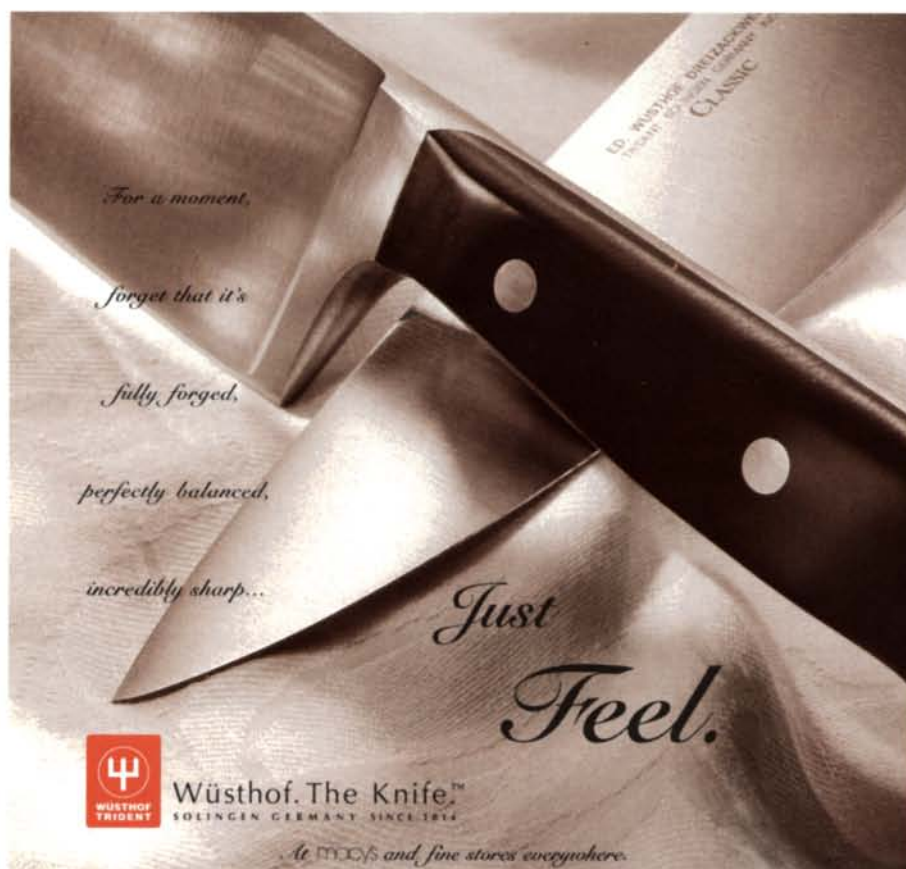
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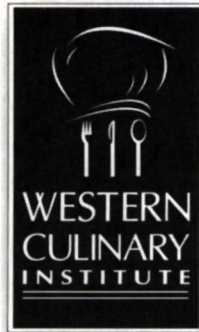
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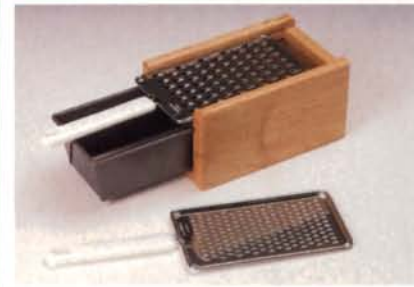
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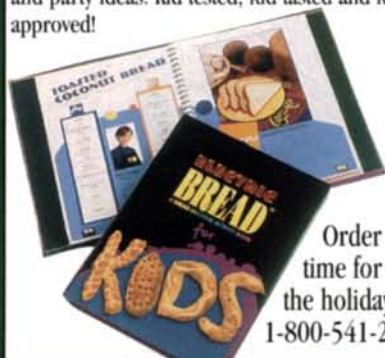
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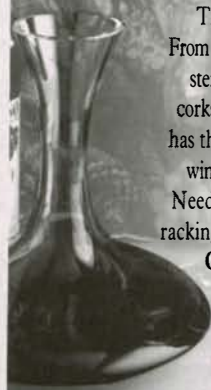


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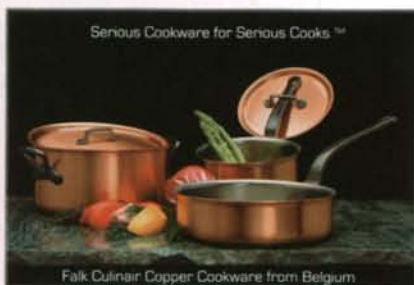
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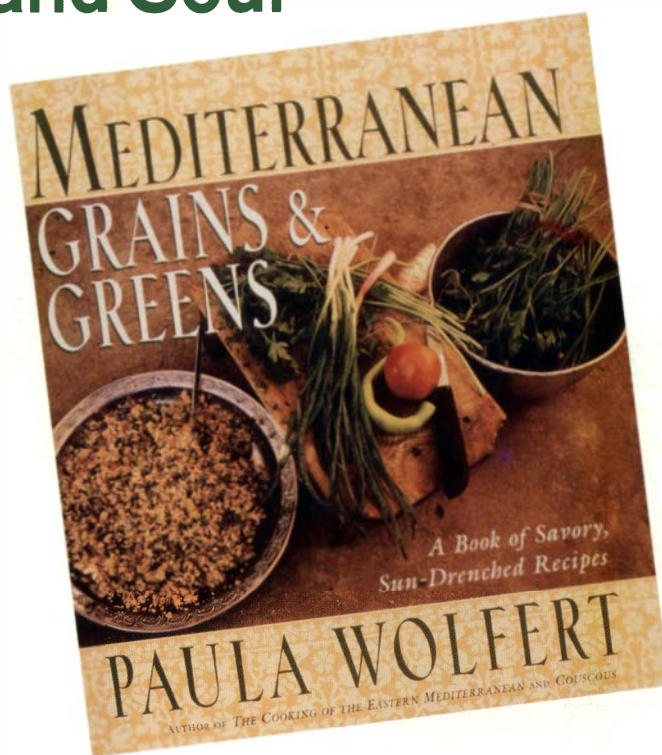
Mediterranean Cooking for the Heart and Soul

Years ago, when I first got my hands on a copy of Paula Wolfert's *Couscous & Other Good Food from Morocco*, I read and reread the book, delighting in the precise depictions Wolfert gave of this marvelous mosaic of a cuisine. She wrote as if she were an impassioned archeologist finding the Rosetta stone of cooking, and her determination got me cooking with pomegranate molasses, preserved lemons, and sumac. Her passion was, and still is, infectious.

Since that first book, Wolfert has broadened her investigations to include foods from the entire rim of the Mediterranean in many more excellent cookbooks, including *The Cooking of the Eastern Mediterranean*, *The Cooking of South-West France*, and *Paula Wolfert's World of Food*. After exploring these lands for so many years, it's amazing that she could still be discovering uncharted territory.

Yet in her new book, *Mediterranean Grains & Greens*, Wolfert manages to bring a completely fresh and timely collection of recipes to dazzle us again. She has found what she sees as a common ground to the disparate cuisines of Tunisia, Israel, Turkey, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Morocco—the leaf and the grain, in their many edible guises.

Wolfert spent five years travelling around the Mediterranean, visiting home cooks and learning to cook their native dishes of greens and



Paula Wolfert dazzles us again with a completely fresh collection of recipes and anecdotes.

grains. Her research has paid off: not only has she uncovered enough culinary treasures to fill Caesar's tables, but she's gotten them to work with our produce in our kitchens.

The book is peppered with anecdotes (but no photographs) from Mediterranean cooks, and Wolfert generously adds her extensive knowledge of unfamiliar Mediterranean ingredients in plenty of helpful headers and boxes. At the same time, she reduces a vast topic into a singularly fascinat-

ing collection of recipes that will introduce us to new ingredients, and to new preparations of familiar ones. Wolfert's very thorough recipes are often time-consuming, but they're never a waste of time.

Wolfert's enthusiasm for greens and grains is certainly well-timed, as the latest nutritional advice reminds us that the American diet lacks leafy greens and complex carbohydrates. Of course, her recipes don't come close to resembling what we think of as health

***Mediterranean Grains & Greens*, by Paula Wolfert.**
HarperCollins, 1998.
\$27.50, hardcover; 400 pp.
ISBN 0-06-017251-7.

food. But her flavors are so delicious that we'll surely eat much more greens and grains, which is ultimately the point.

Wolfert begins with a chapter called "A Bowl of Leafy Greens," in which she introduces us to the wide range of edible leafy greens and discusses how to shop for them and cook them. She's particularly fascinated by wild greens and tries to bring something of the forager's ethos to the book, although, of course, she includes cultivated alternatives.

The brief chapter on breads and pastries highlights her concentration on the unfamiliar. Recipes are from Greece and around the eastern Mediterranean, with the better-documented bread-baking traditions of France and Italy left for other books. The most unusual bread is Chickpea-Leavened Bread & Rusks (rusks are a hard biscuit made from yeast dough), which calls for a chickpea starter and durum and barley flours. This chapter includes thrifty bread-based dishes, like a Spanish breakfast dish called Bread Crumb "Paella" with sausages, grapes, and fried eggs.

"Soups" is next, and Wolfert has an interesting collection. Some are extremely simple and delicious, such as Farro, Leafy Greens & Potato Soup, in which boiled farro, a starchy Italian grain, is simmered in broth with mashed and sautéed potatoes and seasoned with garlic, red pepper, and arugula. (Red pepper

flakes and garlic appear frequently in the recipes.) On the other hand, here we find what must be the most time-consuming recipe in recent cookbook history—Home-made Cretan Rustic Pasta, a sort of grits used in soups in Greece, Crete, and Turkey. Just listen to what you have to do: Ferment goat's milk for three to four days; soak and crack skinned wheat; sieve the wheat into coarse and fine boltings; cook it with the fermented goat's milk; finally, spoon this porridge into small mounds and dry it in a dehydrator for three days. In all, making these pellets takes up to a week. No wonder the Greeks prepare their rustic pasta just once a year.

The treats in "Appetizers," "Salads," and "Light Meals" sound so good and so substantial that you'll find yourself making whole meals out of them. Wolfert gives a cherished recipe for Madame Saucourt's Fabulous Ratatouille, which serves 16 to 20 and uses a quart of extra-virgin olive oil, certainly the ultimate treat for a party of food lovers. "My theory is that when you find the holy grail of a dish, you

Warm Escarole & Pomegranates with Sherry & Sherry Wine Vinegar

(From *Mediterranean Grains & Greens*.) Serves three or four.

1 small head escarole
2 small cloves garlic, peeled and lightly crushed
2 Tbs. olive oil
2 tsp. sherry wine vinegar
2 tsp. dry sherry
½ tsp. salt
Pinch of freshly ground black pepper
½ cup pomegranate seeds

Thoroughly wash the escarole, separate the soft tender leaves, and dry. Tear the leaves into 1 ½- to 2-inch pieces and place in a wide salad bowl. You should have about 6 cups.

In a skillet gently warm the garlic in 1 Tbs. of the olive oil and discard the garlic. Add the vinegar and dry sherry to the oil and bring just to a boil. Pour over the greens to just warm them. Add the remaining oil, salt, and pepper and toss well. Scatter pomegranate seeds on top and serve at once.

must respect it and never corrupt it," Wolfert writes. Amen. I made the "Alexandria Quartet" of Rice, Brown Lentils, Pan-Crisped Pasta & Browned Onions and delighted in the sheer yumminess of the rich, earthy flavors of this domesticated street food. Pasta with Bitter Greens & Tomato Sauce had me making one of the best, most intensely flavored tomato sauces I've ever tried.

"Main Courses" are generally the most elaborate preparations in the book and are fabulous dinner-party food. If

you're a couscous lover, I'm sure Wolfert will have you rolling your own: it sounds so light and fluffy. She has an extensive section on Spanish rice dishes called *arroces*, many of which are based on fish stock and traditionally cooked over an open fire. Ms. Wolfert reports that *Arroz a Banda*, a rice dish with shrimp, squid, and two sauces, is so good that it makes grown gourmets cry. Naturally she has a *bisteeya*, the dish she introduced to us in *Couscous*, this one with seafood, spinach, and noodles.

The other star in this galaxy is polenta. Ms. Wolfert shares the best polenta technique I've ever encountered, and believe it or not, it's easy. The polenta is slowly baked and stirred only a few times. It's truly wonderful.

Desserts are rather scant—fresh fruit would be the obvious closing to such meals—but there are a few treasures, including a lovely Anatolian Rice Pudding, an extraordinarily delicate dessert of rice floating in a pudding barely thickened with starch simmered out of wheatberries.

Mediterranean Grains & Greens is real food wrought from real effort, perfect for intent cooks looking for adventure—with a little time on their hands. Or, if you're like me and love to cook and eat well despite being time-poor, this book still has plenty of simple recipes with short ingredient lists and many more that allow cherry-picking for shorter versions of Wolfert's lustily flavored foods.

Maggie Glezer, a baker, is writing a book on artisan breads. See her article on durum bread on p. 62 in this issue. ♦

What's your favorite Mediterranean cookbook?

"My favorite Mediterranean cookbook is *Lulu's Provençal Table: The Exuberant Food and Wine from Domaine Tempier*, by Richard Olney."

—Alice Waters, founder, Chez Panisse, Berkeley, California

"I really like Joyce Goldstein's *Kitchen Conversations*. It doesn't bill itself as Mediterranean, but it's full of her terrific Mediterranean recipes."

—Tony Mantuano, Mantuano's Mediterranean Table, Chicago

"When I was a young cook, I read Paula Wolfert's *Couscous & Other Good Food from Morocco*, and it inspired me like no other book. Her research is so impressive, and I've learned so much from her."

—Steve Johnson, chef, The Blue Room, Boston

"My hands-down favorite is a book I picked up in Italy about ten years ago called

Le Ricetta Regionali Italiane, edited by Anna Rosetti della Salda. It's a wonderful collection of simple Italian recipes. Closer to home, Fred Plotkin's *Recipes from Paradise: Life & Food on the Italian Riviera* is a terrific book—well-written and full of historical anecdotes, great pictures, and authentic recipes.

—Alan Tardi, chef-owner, Follonico, New York City

At the Market

The Pepper Gal (954/537-5540) carries seeds for more than 100 varieties of sweet peppers. Pepper seeds are also available from **Renee's Garden** (888/880-7228), **Tomato Growers Supply** (888/478-7333), or **Totally Tomatoes** (803/663-0016).

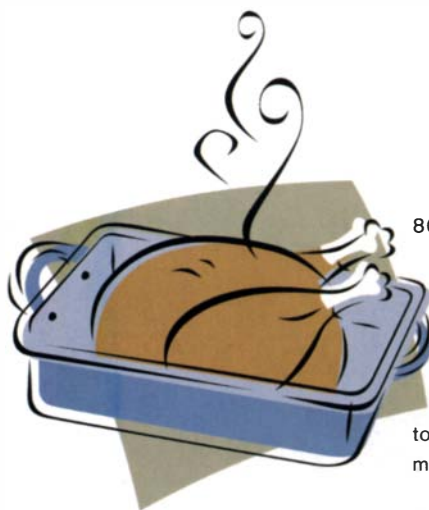
Enjoying Wine

Didier Boutet at **The Spirit of Wine** (860/868-2181) does consulting for wine lists and wine cellars.

To order the **Quarterly PocketList**, a guide to wine ratings, call 800/524-1005.

Chili

For chiles, *pasilla* powder, and *masa harina* try **Coyote Cafe General Store** (800/866-4695) or **Pendry's Chile Supply** (800/533-1870).



Thanksgiving Feast

If you can't find a fresh turkey locally, you can order one (be sure to call well ahead of time). **D'Artagnan** (800/327-8246) and **Citarella** (800/588-0383) both sell fresh free-range and organic turkeys. **Murray's** (800/741-3871) sells fresh all-natural (no growth hormones) turkeys.

Roasting Pans

All-Clad is sold in many stores throughout the country; call

800/ALL-CLAD (255-2523) for retailers near you. **Bourgeat** and **Mauviel** are more difficult to find. **Bourgeat** can be reached directly at 617/469-0189, and **Mauviel** has a web site (that seems to be only in French): www.mauviel.com.

All three product lines are sold by mail from **A Cook's Wares** (800/915-9788). **All-Clad** and **Bourgeat** are sold by mail from **Professional Cutlery Direct** (800/859-6994; the **Bourgeat** roasting pan needs to be special-ordered).

All-Clad and **Mauviel** are sold by **Sur la Table** (800/243-0852), as is an "under-the-turkey" rack similar to the one Jim Peterson mentioned. It's a flat, oval, non-stick rack, about 14½x10 inches, with hinged handles; \$1.95, product number 19730.

Durum Flatbread

Order a slender professional rolling pin (also called a *ficelle*) like the one Maggie Glezer uses on p. 64 for \$8 from **Kitchen Krafts** (800/776-0575).

Oysters

To order oysters from the Pacific Northwest, try **Taylor Shellfish Farms**, (360/426-6178; www.taylorshellfish.com).

American Pies

Abby Dodge uses a tapered rolling pin for rolling pie crust. You can order one for about \$10 from **Sur la Table** (800/243-0852).

Artisan Foods

Wood's Cider Mill (802/263-5547) will mail-order cider jelly as well as boiled cider, maple, syrup, and cider syrup.

Illustration: Kyle D. Dreier

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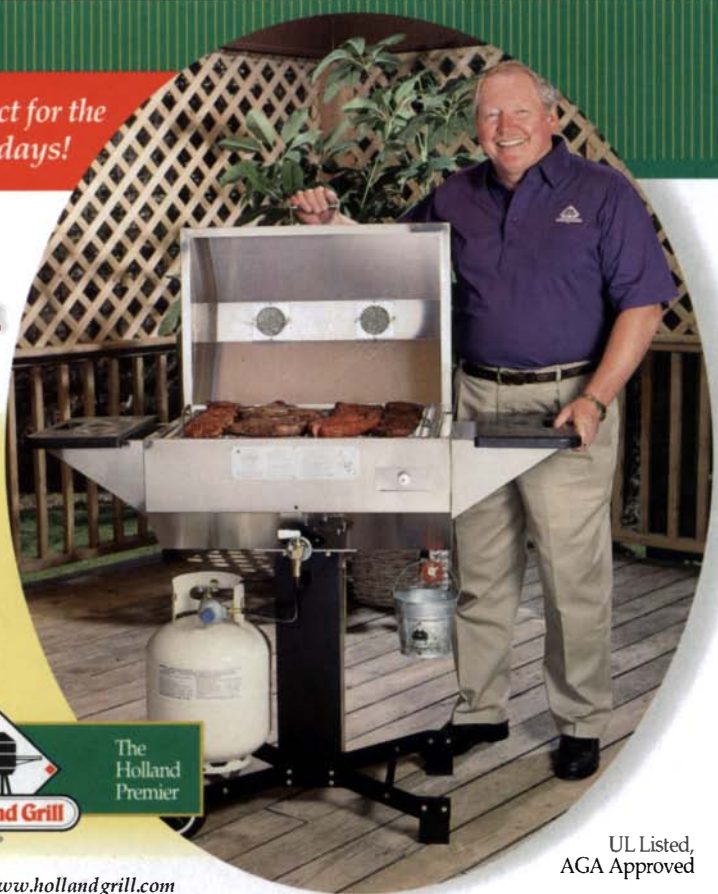
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Ginger—A Fresh Flavor That Packs Some Heat

Ginger is one of those ingredients that can be many things to many people. Not only is it used in cuisines around the world, but it also comes in a variety of forms—fresh, pickled, dried, and crystallized among them.

People who bake may immediately call to mind the ground ginger they use in gingerbread or the jewel-like crystallized ginger they add to holiday cookies and cakes. Others think first of ginger's savory contributions: the brightness that minced fresh ginger adds to Chinese stir-fry, or the refreshing tang of pickled ginger served with sushi.

Ginger comes in many forms.
From top: fresh, pickled, crystallized, and dried ground.

Rarely used as the sole flavoring in recipes, ginger combines particularly well with the warm spice notes of cumin and coriander in savory preparations. Garlic,

mustard seed, turmeric, and the whole palette of Indian seasonings would shine less brightly without ginger's glow. In sweets such as quick breads, muffins, and preserves, ginger is part of a classic triumvirate along with cinnamon and cloves.

In each of its incarnations, however, ginger makes its simultaneously hot and refreshing presence known.

Fresh ginger packs the most punch

Light tan with knobby, finger-like branches, fresh ginger is available at most supermarkets, although I usually find better quality ginger at Asian markets, where it moves off the shelves faster.

The best fresh ginger has smooth, unblemished skin. It should be hard and break cleanly with a snap. Fresh ginger will keep for a week at room temperature and for a month in the fridge. Cutting

pieces from it doesn't ruin the integrity of the root; remove any of the cut edge that looks less than firm and use what you need of the rest, which remains in perfect condition.

I almost always peel ginger; the skin comes off easily with a vegetable peeler or a small paring knife. I make an exception if I'm using it in a marinade or sugar syrup from which it will be retrieved. In those cases, I simply slice the ginger and smash it slightly to release its aromatic oils. Young ginger, a real treat if you can find it, is less fibrous with a pale, thinner skin that doesn't need to be peeled.

When slicing ginger for a julienne, trim the root into a rectangle and slice it lengthwise. Stack the slices and cut them into matchsticks. To dice the ginger, cut the matchsticks crosswise into cubes. You can also make ginger "coins" by slicing the root into rounds across the grain.

Pickled ginger is fresh ginger that's been brined. More and more supermarkets are carrying pickled ginger, and

Experiment with ginger

- ♦ Mix an easy, delicious marinade for chicken, fish, meat, or even vegetables, made with chopped fresh ginger, garlic, soy sauce, and sesame oil.
- ♦ Store peeled fresh ginger slices in a mild dry sherry. The resulting flavored liquid makes the base for a delicious pan sauce for chicken.
- ♦ Whirl some peeled, fresh ginger in a blender with plain yogurt, a little sugar, and a dash of salt for a creamy, Indian-inspired summer drink.
- ♦ Infuse a sugar syrup with fresh ginger slices. Add the syrup to iced tea and lemonade, or pour it over fresh or poached fruit.
- ♦ Cut fresh ginger into a fine julienne and fry the sticks in oil for a delicious, crunchy garnish for fish.
- ♦ Add flavor to butter by mixing in some ground ginger and chopped lime zest; use the butter to top grilled fish.
- ♦ Brighten buttery scones or shortbread by adding finely chopped crystallized ginger to the dough.
- ♦ Dip crystallized ginger in bittersweet chocolate to serve on a dessert plate.



you'll always find it at Asian markets. Pickled ginger is great with fish. I love to pair ginger, especially pickled ginger, with fatty fish like salmon because the ginger makes the fish feel less rich.

Pickled ginger is easy to make. Simply peel fresh ginger and slice it into thin ribbons. Cook the slices for a few minutes in lightly salted water, drain, and flavor to taste with sugar and a good-quality rice vinegar (I like a ratio of four parts vinegar to one part sugar). Allow the ginger to cool and store it with its brine in a canning jar with a good lid in the refrigerator.

I like to use the brine in vinaigrettes or as an intriguing base in place of vinegar in

emulsified sauces like *beurre blanc* or hollandaise.

Dried and crystallized are best for baking

As with all aromatic flavorings, the dried version is an echo of the fresh form, and in the case of ginger, the dried can't replace the fresh. But dried ginger has its merits, lending its warm, sweet aroma to cakes, cookies, and puddings. If the texture of the dessert allows, however, I add an equal amount of grated fresh ginger along with the ground; I find the resulting one-two punch of the fresh and dried is doubly delicious.

Look for crystallized ginger that isn't rock hard, stuck together, or otherwise



To mince ginger:

Peel and square off the root. Slice with the grain; stack the slices, julienne, and then chop. Ginger coins (above right) are perfect for marinades.

denuded of its sugar coating—signs of age or poor quality. The best crystallized ginger, which comes from Australia, is so good that I like to eat it out of hand as an after-dinner sweet.

Robert Wemischner wrote *The Vivid Flavors Cookbook* (Lowell House) and co-wrote with Karen Karp *Gourmet to Go* (Wiley), a guide to operating a specialty food store. ♦

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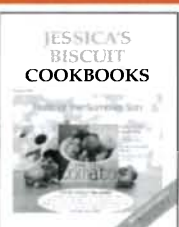
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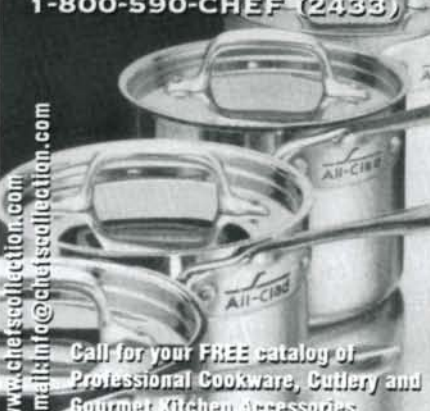


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NUTRITION INFORMATION

Recipe (analysis per serving)	Page	Calories		Protein (g)	Carb (g)	Fats (g)				Chol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Notes
		total	from fat			total	sat	mono	poly				
Spiced Pecans	31	220	180	2	12	20	3	11	4	10	610	2	per ¼ cup
Wild Rice, Spiced Pecan Stuffing	31	170	80	4	19	9	2	5	2	35	710	2	per ½ cup
Roasted Turkey with Apple Cider Gravy	32	880	490	75	10	55	21	21	8	265	1950	1	
Buttercup Squash Soup w/Herb Butter	34	150	70	3	16	8	5	2	0	20	160	4	per cup
Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes	35	160	80	2	17	9	6	3	0	25	720	2	per ½ cup
Warm Salad of Greens w/ Vinaigrette	35	270	240	2	9	27	4	11	11	0	190	2	w/2 Tbs. dressing
Cranberry Citrus Compote	36	100	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	per ¼ cup
Pear, Cherry & Apricot Crisp	36	510	170	5	86	18	11	5	1	45	25	6	
Mexican-Style Chili	39	610	320	46	31	35	9	12	8	140	970	9	
Chicken & Pinto Bean Chili	40	470	110	41	48	13	7	3	2	115	1990	16	w/3 Tbs. cheese
Tex-Mex Chili	41	750	280	80	32	31	12	13	6	235	230	7	
Roasted Shrimp with Marinade	44	250	50	42	4	6	1	1	3	385	1350	0	
Stir-Fried Shrimp with Jalapeño Sauce	45	390	100	51	22	11	2	2	6	440	810	3	
Sautéed Shrimp with Balsamic Sauce	46	400	200	42	6	22	13	6	2	440	940	0	
Shrimp Bread Salad w/Garlic Vinaigrette	46	550	260	42	34	28	5	19	4	335	950	3	
Braised Stuffed Endive	48	470	310	27	13	35	17	13	2	160	970	7	
Grilled Endive with Pancetta	50	350	280	12	8	31	5	22	3	75	960	3	
Endive, Apple & Walnut Salad	50	260	210	7	8	24	5	6	12	15	500	3	
Rich Chocolate Muffins	55	630	340	9	73	38	22	10	2	190	45	3	per muffin
Cornmeal-Cherry Muffins	55	370	110	7	56	13	5	4	3	50	280	3	per muffin
Pumpkin-Spice Muffins	55	340	120	6	52	13	8	4	1	70	280	3	per muffin
Lemony Goat Cheese Dressing	60	60	40	3	1	4.5	3	1	0	10	150	0	per 2 Tbs.
Savory Mushroom Tart	60	800	550	20	44	61	36	18	4	140	1010	3	
Polenta with Goat Cheese & Fresh Sage	61	130	45	5	16	5	3	1	0	10	460	1	
Durum Flatbread with Pressed Herbs	66	100	15	3	18	1.5	0	1	0.5	0	350	2	½ loaf
Classic Pie Crust	75	310	160	4	32	18	9	6	2	30	150	1	per ⅛ double crust
Pear Raisin Pie	76	600	190	6	94	21	9	7	4	30	200	6	per slice (⅛ pie)
Apple Cider Pie	76	510	190	5	77	21	10	7	2	40	160	4	per slice (⅛ pie)
Pumpkin Praline Pie	77	440	210	6	54	24	13	7	2	140	160	2	per slice (⅛ pie)
Chocolate Pecan Pie	77	610	280	7	82	32	10	15	5	105	160	3	per slice (⅛ pie)
Broccoli Raab & Beans over Bread	98	460	120	16	72	13	2	8	2	0	1090	13	

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at The Food Consulting Company of San Diego, California. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in

the calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used.

For a Meal That Nourishes Body and Soul, Try Beans and Greens on Toast

I love eating things on toast. There's something so comforting about it. Vegetables over toast—like this recipe featuring broccoli raab and cannellini beans on garlic rubbed bread—is one of my favorite easy suppers. It's fast, homey, nourishing. This is not a dinner for company—unless you're cooking for a very good friend.

For some people, greens and beans can sound pretty virtuous. But if you vividly imagine what you're working with—assertive, flavorful greens cooked until tender and melt-in-your-mouth white beans seasoned with rosemary and anointed with fruity olive oil—you'll realize that this is about flavor, not vitamins. The warm, toasted bread (if you can grill the bread, so much the better) gets rubbed with a garlic clove for even more flavor. For a deluxe version, try covering the bread with fresh mozzarella, broil it until the cheese starts to run, and then ladle the beans and greens over that.

Using canned cannellini beans makes this meal a fast one. I prefer the flavor and texture of organically grown beans, like those canned by Eden Foods. They cost a little more, but if you can find them, they're worth it.

Deborah Madison recently won a James Beard award and the IACP/Julia Child Cookbook of the Year award for her latest book, Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone (Broadway). ♦



Broccoli Raab & Cannellini Beans over Garlic Bread

How many slices of bread you toast depends on the size of the loaf. Serves two amply.

1 bunch broccoli raab, washed
1½ Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil;
more for drizzling
1 small onion, finely chopped
1½ to 2 tsp. finely chopped
fresh rosemary
2 cloves garlic, minced, plus
1 whole clove to rub on the
toast
Dried red chile flakes to taste
15-oz. can cannellini beans,
rinsed and drained
Salt and freshly ground black
pepper to taste
2 to 4 thick slices sturdy
country-style bread,
preferably sourdough
Lemon wedges or red-wine
vinegar

Peel the larger stems of the broccoli raab and slice them thinly. Chop the leaves coarsely. Heat the olive oil in a 10-inch skillet. Add the onion and rosemary and cook over

medium-high heat until the onion softens and begins to color, about 5 min. Add the minced garlic and a pinch or two of chile flakes and cook 1 min. longer. Add the chopped raab leaves and stems along with 1 cup of water and cook, stirring occasionally, until the raab is wilted, about 5 min. Add the beans (and more water as needed) until the greens are cooked, about another 15 min. Season well with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, toast the bread on the grill or under the broiler. Rub one side of the toast all over with the reserved garlic clove. Set a slice or two of bread on each plate. Spoon the beans and greens over the toast. Drizzle olive oil liberally over the beans and greens. Top

with a squeeze of lemon juice or a splash of red-wine vinegar.

VARIATIONS:

♦ Cover the toast with a layer of shaved Parmesan, Asiago, or Monterey Dry Jack cheese before adding the greens and beans. Or shave thin flakes of cheese over the sandwich, as shown above.

♦ Cover the toast with a layer of thinly sliced fresh mozzarella cheese and broil it until the cheese bubbles and melts. Top with the beans and greens.

♦ Try milder greens, such as chard or spinach. Collards are also good, but they'll take longer to cook.

♦ Try French green lentils in place of the beans and garnish with a sieved or crumbled hard-cooked egg.

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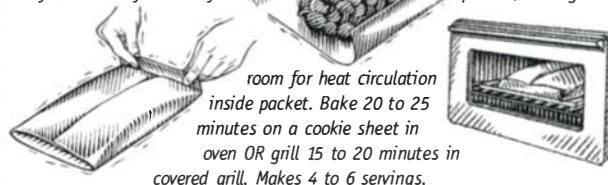
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| 1 sheet (18 x 24-inches)
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or zucchini, sliced |
| 1 small onion, thinly sliced | 1 teaspoon dried basil leaves |
| 3 cups broccoli florets | 1 teaspoon garlic salt |
| 2 medium carrots, thinly sliced | 2 ice cubes |
| | 2 tablespoons margarine or butter |

Preheat oven to 450°F or preheat grill to medium-high. Center vegetables on sheet of Reynolds Wrap Heavy Duty Aluminum Foil. Sprinkle with seasonings. Top with ice cubes. Dot with margarine. Bring up sides of foil and double fold. Double fold ends to form one foil packet, leaving



room for heat circulation inside packet. Bake 20 to 25 minutes on a cookie sheet in oven OR grill 15 to 20 minutes in covered grill. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

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Apple Cider Jelly Tastes Like Autumn

For about three weeks in late fall, the air around Willis and Tina Wood's farm in Springfield, Vermont, is heavy with the scent of apples. Bushel after bushel of locally grown McIntosh apples get ground, crushed, and evaporated to make delicious boiled cider and pure cider jelly.

The grinding and pressing takes place on the farm's original wooden screw press, which has been in use since 1882. (The farm has been in the Wood family since 1798.) Modern machines use centrifugal force to separate juice from apples in a fraction of the time it takes the Woods to press their cider, but Willis swears his old-fashioned method gives his product more body and better flavor. "Maybe because it takes us more time, we like to think it's better." It is.



"We couldn't make jelly in mid-September," says Willis, moving a bushel of bruised, overripe apples. "You wouldn't want to bite into these apples, but they gel well."



Family friend Ahmet Baycu rakes flat one of the 13 layers of ground apples. The grinder is suspended above the press in the barn's loft.



A waterfall of cider. Giant hand-cranked screws attached to large pieces of timber squeeze the juice from thousands of apples. A tank below the press collects the juice.



Pure apple cider jelly transforms plain bread into something wonderful. Wood's Cider Mill makes as much as 600 pounds of the jelly a day during the short season.



Nine gallons of cider boil down to make one gallon of jelly. A wood-fueled evaporator cooks the bulk of the cider. Here, Willis checks on the concentration of the cider to see if it's ready to gel.